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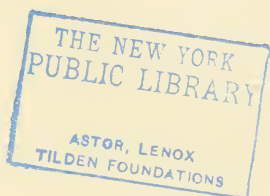
✦ LUCY ✦
AND THEIR
MAJESTIES
By B - L - FARJEON

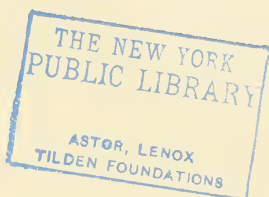


LUCY
AND THEIR MAJESTIES



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“‘And this menu,’ exclaimed Henry VIII, ‘it likes us well!’”

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LUCY AND THEIR MAJESTIES

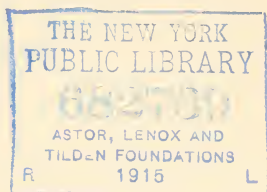
A COMEDY IN WAX

BY
B. L. FARJEON

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
FANNY Y. CORY AND GEORGE VARIAN

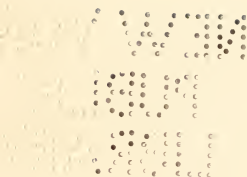


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1904



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LUCY
AND THEIR MAJESTIES

LUCY AND THEIR MAJESTIES

A COMEDY IN WAX

CHAPTER I

THE LITTLE OLD WOMAN IN BLACK

“**W**HAT is the matter with you, little girl?
You seem to be in trouble.”

Lucy looked up. The voice was kind, and she felt the need of sympathy just then, being very lonely and not at all happy in her mind. She was standing between Groups 1 and 2 in the center of the Grand Saloon, and no one was near her except the lovely Mme. Sainte Amaranthe (who lay fast asleep on her crimson couch) and a few other figures, among whom was a Little Old Woman in Black in the act of taking a pinch of snuff from a silver snuff-box. But *they* were all waxwork peo-

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ple, and it would have been too great a stretch of imagination to suppose that any one of them could have addressed her in a human voice.

It was rather late in the afternoon. The first part of the concert was over, and there was an interval of an hour and a half before the second part commenced. The Rumanian Orchestra had played Waldteufel's "Waltz of the Sirens," and had gone to tea; so had nearly all the visitors. Little Lucy Scarlett was alone in the midst of these waxwork celebrities, some affable, some stern, some simpering, some exceedingly stately and dignified, and all staring straight before them, without so much as winking an eyelid.

"Of course nobody spoke," said Lucy to herself. "I wonder what made me think so."

To her astonishment she was answered: "Because you heard me, my dear. I asked what was the matter with you."

It was the Little Old Woman in Black who addressed the little girl. She wore a black silk dress, and a black silk cape, and a black bonnet with white frillings inside. Her hair and eyes were brown, and she had a pair of steel spectacles on her nose. Lucy stared at her in

amazement, but somehow she did not feel afraid, there was such a benevolent expression on the old lady's face.

"You are surprised to hear me speak," observed the figure.

"Yes, I am," Lucy answered frankly.

"It *must* seem singular, I own," said the figure, "but you need not be frightened. I am not at all an ill-natured person."

"I am sure you are not," replied Lucy, "your face is so kind. Are you a 'celebrated person'?"

"I should not be here if I were not. We don't put nobodies in this exhibition—I should think not, indeed! Everybody here is somebody—I take good care of that. You have a catalogue, I see. I am Mme. Tussaud.¹ Read what they say about me."

Lucy turned over the pages, and read aloud:

"'Mme. Tussaud, the foundress of the exhibition, was born in Berne, Switzerland, in 1760. Being left an orphan—' Oh, dear!"

¹ Pronounced Tus-sō'. Mme. Tussaud's Exhibition of Waxworks in Marylebone Road is one of the most popular shows in London, and for the last sixty or seventy years has been regarded as essentially a British institution. Throughout the whole of the year it attracts daily a large number of visitors, and at holiday-time it is thronged with children.

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she cried, interrupting herself, " I never heard of such a thing. Born in 1760! Why, you must be—"

" A hundred and forty-four years old," said the old lady, complacently, " and I am proud of it."

" But I thought you were wax, ma'am."

" I dare say. Every one who comes here thinks so. Every one is mistaken. Sometimes, though, people coming up to me give a start, and think I am real, and then, after a little while, laugh and say, ' Upon my word, I thought she was alive!' It is a great compliment, for it shows what a good imitation I am."

" Can you walk about if you wish? " asked Lucy, softly.

" Certainly I can," replied Mme. Tussaud, " and I would do so now to prove it to you, only I don't want to attract attention; it would set everything in commotion. At the present moment we have this part of the show to ourselves; but if I shifted my position, or moved my head, or stroked your cheek,—which I should like to do, my dear,—the attendants would come running up to see what was the

matter. That is why I keep so still when there is any risk of being observed. Oh, yes, I can walk about, and, considering my age, I am very active."

"How wonderful!" exclaimed Lucy.

"But enough about that just now. It really distresses me to see young folk unhappy, and you seem to be so. Are you?"

"Yes, ma'am," sighed Lucy, "very, very unhappy!"

"You're surely not disappointed in my show. I could hardly bear that."

"Oh, no; it is a beautiful show. I've never seen anything half so beautiful."

"If you searched the whole world through," said Mme. Tussaud, proudly, "you would not find a better. All the people who come here are happy; I should be vexed if they were not. Shall it be said that I am a failure? Have I not done my best to make them happy?"

"I am sure you have," said Lucy, quickly, for Mme. Tussaud seemed rather hurt.

"Well, then, *you* must be happy. I insist upon it."

"I wish I could be," said Lucy, her lips quivering, "but I can't."

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“Tell me why; I may be able to help you. Do they treat you badly at home? Do you have enough to eat? Does Miss Pennyback slap you?”

“It is n’t anything like that,” said Lucy, with difficulty keeping back her tears. “It’s because of Lydia.”

“Oh—Lydia. Who is she?”

“My sister, ma’am.”

“When I first noticed you, nearly two hours ago,” said Mme. Tussaud, “you were not alone. There was a bright young fellow of about four-and-twenty with you.”

“That was Harry Bower, ma’am.”

“And there was another man, much older, with a mean, sharp nose and red hair.”

“Yes, ma’am, the monster—Mr. Lorimer Grimweed.”

“And there was a pretty girl in a blue dress—a Bower on one side of her and a Grimweed on the other. Was that Lydia?”

“Yes, ma’am,” said Lucy, eagerly. “She is pretty, is n’t she?”

“Sweetly pretty, my dear, and I am very much mistaken if somebody else does n’t think so, too. Nothing escapes my notice; I am

a very observant person. I see everything that goes on around me, and it struck me that Mr. Harry Bower looked far more often at Lydia than he did at my celebrities. Oh, I was n't offended—not at all! I heard something, too. Harry Bower looked at me and said, 'What a nice-looking little lady!' The Grimweed man looked and said, '*I* call her a regular fright!'

"That's just like the monster," said Lucy. "He's always saying disagreeable things; and oh, he does tell *such* stories!"

"Good little girl! Now, what is the matter with Lydia?" Lucy hesitated. "Come, come, child, speak."

"Can you keep a secret?" asked Lucy, softly.

"Yes, indeed I can. If people only knew the secrets I have kept these last hundred years! Volumes of them. Now let me hear yours."

"Lydia is in love." The child's face was very solemn, and her voice very low, as she imparted this tremendous piece of information to the old lady.

"Ha—h'm! That is indeed extraordi-

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nary. So unusual, you know. How old is Lydia?"

"Eighteen."

"Ah!" said Mme. Tussaud, in a wistful tone. "*I* was eighteen once, and *I* was in love. Is Harry Bower Lydia's sweetheart?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Is he unkind to her?"

"Oh, no! He is the kindest young gentleman you ever saw."

"Then why don't they marry? They could come here often. They could n't visit a better place—so quiet and improving, with royalty looking on and never interfering. And a refreshment-room down-stairs where they could have ice-cream. And delightful music all day long, played by a famous band."

"Papa will not let them," said Lucy, shaking her head sorrowfully. "He says that Lydia shall marry Lorimer Grimweed, and she hates the sight of him—and so do I."

"Grimweed is a most disagreeable name," said Mme. Tussaud, "and would not look bad on the bills. If you could get him to do some horrible deed, something to make the public's flesh creep, I would put him in my

Chamber of Horrors, and there would be an end of him." Lucy shuddered. "But why does your papa wish Lydia to marry Grimweed instead of Harry Bower?"

"He is richer than Harry; besides, Marybud Lodge, where we live, belongs to him. Our lease expires this year, and if Lydia does n't marry him he will rent the place to another family, and papa can't be happy anywhere else. Papa has lived there all his life, and is quite wretched at the thought of being turned away. He has spent ever so much money on the place, and it will all belong to the monster if Lydia does n't marry him. Just as if he did n't have money enough already! He is always talking of his riches."

"I see. But how does it happen that this Grimweed came with you to my show this afternoon?"

"It's rather mixed, ma'am," replied Lucy. "Some friends in Cavendish Square wanted me to spend a few days with them,—Marybud Lodge is in Barnet, you know,—and Lydia said she would bring me to London herself, and would take me to see your show first."

"Sensible girl, that Lydia. The more I

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hear of her the better I like her. How does it happen that Harry Bower came too? ”

“ I ’m sure I don’t know, ma’am,” said Lucy.

“ Ah, I see. Go on, my dear.”

“ Well, last night,” continued Lucy, “ Mr. Grimweed dropped in, and said he would come with us to-day, and escort Lydia home in the evening; and papa accepted the offer at once, though Lydia tried hard to put him off. When the monster found Harry here he was dreadfully cross; and he was crosser still when I asked him to take me to the Napoleon Room, so that Lydia and Harry could stay where they were.”

“ You did n’t tell him that, did you, child? ”

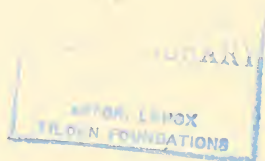
“ Oh, no. He thought they were following us, and was so angry when he missed them that he chipped bits out of Napoleon’s carriage, and said he would keep them as relics.”

“ The wretch ought to be prosecuted!” cried Mme. Tussaud, fiercely. “ My dear, I am greatly interested in what you have told me. I must punish that Grimweed man, and your papa must be brought to reason.”

Lucy shook her head mournfully. “ He



Lucy



won't be, ma'am. He has made up his mind that Lydia shall marry the monster, and when papa makes up his mind to anything, nobody in the world can make him change it."

"Oh, indeed!" said Mme. Tussaud, and it was evident that she was not only greatly interested, but very much nettled. "Nobody in the world! Upon my word! As if *I* could n't bring him to reason!"

"You could n't, ma'am—no; you could n't! You don't know papa, ma'am. He will command Lydia to marry the monster, and then she will die—and I shall die, too!" And with this, tears began to roll down the little girl's face.

"Dry your eyes," said Mme. Tussaud, in rather a sharp tone, "or people will think you don't like my show. My mind is made up. I can be quite as determined as your papa—oh, yes, I can! He *shall* be brought to reason, if you have the courage to do as I tell you."

"I will do anything to make Lydia happy—anything in the world!" exclaimed Lucy.

"Very well, child. What is your name?"

"Lucy, ma'am."

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“ Nice name. How far is it to Marybud Lodge, Lucy? ”

“ Nine or ten miles from here, I think.”

“ H’m. It might be done,” mused Mme. Tussaud.

“ They deserve an outing, and it would be *such* an advertisement for us!” continued Mme. Tussaud, as if talking to herself. “ Such a wonderful advertisement! Why, we should be more popular than ever! But that is not the reason, child.” She was now addressing Lucy, who was wondering what the old lady was talking about. “ It is because I am resolved that no one shall be miserable in my show, and no one shall go away miserable. My dear, I think there is one place in London where people may be sure of spending a happy day, and that is here. And you shall be happy, and Lydia shall be happy, and we will teach that Grimweed man a lesson he will not forget. Hearts are not made to be broken—no, indeed; I will not allow it.” She paused to take breath, and then added doubtfully, “ But, after all, Lucy, I am afraid you have n’t the courage.”

“ I have, ma’am, I have!” cried Lucy, who

was now very much excited. "Try me—do!"

"You would have to remain in the show till all the people have gone away. What do you say to that?"

"I don't mind," said Lucy, bravely; "I don't, indeed."

"And nobody must see you. You must hide."

"Yes, ma'am. Where?"

"That is an important point. We must decide quickly, because the visitors will soon be coming back. There 's the Royal Group on the left of me; but you could scarcely escape observation there. If you were to creep under the throne you would certainly be seen. Dear, dear! where *can* you hide? Ah, I have it! Do you see that gentleman who stands in a thoughtful attitude, on a raised platform, nearly facing me on the right-hand side of the saloon?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"That is the glory of the world, Shakspeare, in the costume of the period. At the back of his platform is a vacant space rather close to the wall, but large enough for a little

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girl to hide in. Are you brave enough to creep in there and hide for three or four hours?"

"I would hide there for weeks," said Lucy, trembling with eagerness, "to make Lydia happy."

"That would be too severe a task," said Mme. Tussaud, gaily. "But you can't remain there so long without something to eat. Have you any money?"

"Yes; a two-shilling piece. Lydia gave it to me."

"Lydia is a darling. Before you hide, go down to the refreshment-room and buy some cakes; also buy some chocolate creams. My kings and queens are very fond of them. When they ruled the country, chocolate creams were not invented, and I have heard Henry VIII say that if our great confectioners had been alive in his time, he would have instituted an Order of the Chocolate Cream, and made one of them Grand Master. Sometimes a visitor leaves a little bag on one of the seats, and there is a regular scramble for it. On one occasion Edward V and the Duke of York came to blows over it, and the duke,

who said that Edward did not divide fairly, gave his brother a black eye."

"Oh, dear!" gasped Lucy, whose own eyes opened very wide at what she heard.

"Yes, and I was rather afraid it would spoil my tableau; but fortunately the swelling soon went down. All the same, I was much annoyed, and the duke received a severe scolding from his papa, Edward IV. Oh, there have been strange doings in this place when the public were not looking on! There was great excitement, not so very long ago, when William the Conqueror organized a night attack upon the refreshment-counter downstairs; he enlisted several of the more unruly spirits to aid him in his New Conquest, as he called it, and it was as much as I could do to bring him to order. I don't know that I should have succeeded but for the assistance of Napoleon, Julius Cæsar, and Oliver Cromwell, who agreed that William had committed a serious breach of discipline. But, dear me! we are wandering from the point, and an awkward question has occurred to me. Your sister will be coming back to look for you presently, and when she fails to find you

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she will be much alarmed, and there will probably be a great to-do. Now that is just what I wish to avoid."

"It will be all right, ma'am," said Lucy. "Lydia told me that if we should happen to get parted to-day I was to take a cab from here and go straight to Cavendish Square. It is n't very far, and I have been there before, you know. When she misses me she will think I have done as she said, and she and Harry will go back to Barnet without feeling a bit anxious on my account."

"Capital!" said Mme. Tussaud. "It is really as if things had been arranged for us. Your friends in Cavendish Square may wonder why you don't turn up, but when so much is at stake I don't think we need take *them* into consideration. Well, Lucy, what you have to do is to creep behind Shakspeare's platform when nobody is looking, and remain there till ten o'clock. You will know when the show is over by the band playing 'God Save the King.' Then all the people will go away—to come again to-morrow, I hope. There will be a surprise for them if they do. Dear, dear, dear! What an excitement there

will be in London! It will spread, and spread, and spread, and the people will flock, and flock, and flock! I feel as if I could jump when I think of it. It will be worth thousands and thousands of pounds to us."

All this was as puzzling to Lucy as if the old lady were speaking in Greek, but, for fear that they might be interrupted, she did not stop to ask for an explanation.

"Then," proceeded Mme. Tussaud, cooling down, "when the people are all gone, the attendants will shut up the show and turn out the lights. You must wait till they have finished their work and everything is perfectly still, and then you will creep out of your hiding-place and come to me. Do you understand?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Be very careful to keep out of the way of Lydia and that Grimweed man. If they see you, all our plans will be spoiled. Now, are you sure you can do all this?"

"Quite sure, ma'am."

"Brave little Lucy!" said Mme. Tussaud. "Go and do it."

CHAPTER II

LUCY HAS A WONDERFUL DREAM

AS Lucy turned away her heart beat fast with a wonderful joy. After the first surprise of being spoken to by a wax lady, she saw nothing very startling in her adventure, strange as it was. For Lucy, you see, was of an imaginative nature, and, unlike many of our matter-of-fact boys and girls of to-day, did not turn up her nose at hobgoblins and nymphs and fays. She believed firmly in the dear old fairy tales and elves and ogres; and all such dainty and fantastic creations were, to her, veritable beings of flesh and blood.

On the way to the refreshment-room to purchase the chocolate creams, Lucy caught sight of Mr. Grimweed diligently searching for her; and in another room she spied Lydia and Mr. Bower, who, like herself, were trying to "lose" Mr. Grimweed. As soon as the coast

seemed to be clear she went forward to the refreshment-counter.

With great care she made her purchases, spending sixpence for cakes and eighteenpence for chocolate creams.

When she reached the Grand Saloon the band was playing, and most of the visitors were clustered round the orchestra; only a few people were looking at the wax figures. Lucy lingered a moment or two beside Mme. Tussaud, but the old lady made no sign, so she passed on to Shakspeare's platform and, availing herself of a good opportunity, slipped behind. No one had noticed her, and after a few moments of almost breathless suspense she made herself as snug as possible, and felt that she was safe.

She was not at all uncomfortable; there was just sufficient space between the back of the platform and the wall for her to recline at her ease and listen to the music, the strains of which floated softly to her ears. There was another diversion in the scraps of conversation that reached her from the people passing to and fro, although, to be sure, they were rather confusing:

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“ There is that dear Marie Antoinette, poor thing! Before she was married she ”—

“ Screamed out, ‘ You wretch! you ought to be ’ ”—

“ Mixed with the yolk of three new-laid eggs, well beaten up, and ”—

“ Taken in at the waist, and let out two or three inches at the hem, until ”—

“ I did n’t know where I was; it was quite dark, and ”—

Lucy could not make sense of the chatter, and she gave up trying to; but presently she distinguished voices which she knew.

“ Are you sure Lucy will be all right, Lydia? ”

“ Quite sure; she knows just what to do, and has often been to Cavendish Square before. You have no idea what a brave little thing she is; and so quick and clever! Was n’t it good of her to go off with the monster as she did? ”

“ I am afraid it must have spoiled all her pleasure, Lydia.”

“ We ’ll make it up to her some day, Harry, if we have the chance. Oh, dear, there ’s Mr. Grimweed in the next room, looking about for

us! We seem to have been dodging him all the afternoon. Come away, quick, or he will see us. Besides, it 's getting late—and if you like, sir, you may have the honor of taking me home.”

“Darling Lydia!” thought Lucy, as the two moved away. “It will be all right soon. Mme. Tussaud is going to manage everything, and you and Harry will be happy, and—and—oh, dear! I am so sleepy!”

Her eyes closed, and she fell into a doze. When she awoke she wondered where she was, and it was some time before she could recollect what had occurred.

During her nap the lights in the exhibition had been turned on, but as she had no watch she did not know what time it was. Harry Bower had promised her the prettiest little gold watch in England on the day he and Lydia were married, but the fulfilment of that promise depended entirely upon the Little Old Woman in Black.

Never in Lucy's young life had time passed so slowly. Mme. Tussaud had told her she would have to remain in hiding for three or four hours, but Lucy was ready to aver that

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she had been crouching behind the bard of Avon at least three times as long as that, and the people had not yet left the exhibition. She



“ ‘ Beautiful evening,’ said the sheep, putting on
a pair of white kid gloves ”

closed her eyes again, and began to count a thousand sheep going through a gate; and falling into another doze before she counted eighty, found herself in a large buttercup and

daisy field filled with sheep who were dancing to a waltz by Strauss, which the band was softly playing. Some of the animals had gorgeous ball-dresses on, and others swallow-tails and white ties.

“May I have the pleasure?” said one of the sheep to Lucy, with a graceful bow.

“Yes, you may,” said Lucy.

“Beautiful evening,” said the sheep, putting on a pair of white kid gloves.

“Yes, it is,” said Lucy. “Do you like my white satin shoes?”

“They are beautiful,” said the sheep. “And silk stockings, I see.”

“I always wear silk at a sheep’s party.”

“*I* always wear wool,” said the sheep. “So much more fashionable!”

“You don’t know anything about it,” said Lucy; “and if you are going to dance you’d better begin, or there will be none left.”

Round and round they went, and Lucy was not at all surprised when the sheep changed into Julius Cæsar, who was clasping her waist and waltzing in what he called the Roman style. They got along very well together until Julius Cæsar accused her of not keeping step,

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and when she retorted that it was he who was at fault, he called out in a threatening voice:

“What, ho, my lictors!”

Which so terrified her that she fell upon her knees and implored him to spare her life.

“Who did n’t keep step?” he demanded imperiously.

“It was me,” she answered.

“What shocking grammar!” replied Julius Cæsar. “I forgive your not keeping step, despite your manner of speech. Rise.”

But before Lucy could get up, Lorimer Grimweed appeared with a huge battle-ax, and called out fiercely:

“No! Let her stay where she is! Off with her head! Stand aside, Julius—I’ll do it!”

And he would have done it, Lucy thought, if Harry Bower had not darted forward and seized him by the throat, shouting: “Caitiff!”

At that critical moment Lucy woke up with pins and needles in her foot, and knew she had been dreaming. She had hardly got rid of the pins and needles when she heard a great scuffling, and the band playing “God Save the King.” It was all over at last, and the people were going away. It was more than ever

necessary now that she should be very careful, for everybody was flocking to the stairs near where she was hiding. What a hurry and confusion there was as they hastened away, and how their tongues ran!

Gradually the hubbub grew faint and fainter, till it ceased entirely, and all the visitors were gone. Then Lucy heard the attendants moving about, calling to one another while they performed their last duties for the day, but what those duties were she could not see. She was afraid they were looking for her, and she made herself as small as possible. "What will they do to me if they catch me?" she thought. "Will they lock me up, and will they call Mme. Tussaud as a witness? Oh, I do hope they won't catch me!" She listened to the men talking and laughing and making remarks about the celebrities; and now and then the swish of some soft material fell upon her ears. She could not understand what they meant when they said, "Now, then, stupid, do you want to smother me? A little more this way, Jack. Easy, there, easy! Take care of her head!"

After a while these remarks came to an end.

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The lights were lowered, and the attendants bade one another good night. Then came the sound of the shutting and locking of doors and gates, after which there was a dead silence.

The exhibition was closed for the night.

How strange it seemed! Only a few moments before, the bustle, the laughter, the eager voices—and now not an audible word, not a footstep!

Lucy waited four or five minutes before she ventured to peep out. She saw nothing, heard nothing. After waiting another minute or two, she crept very, very slowly from her hiding-place; and as she once more stood upright and looked around, she was startled at the transformation that had taken place.

CHAPTER III

THE MAGIC TOUCH

NOT a figure was to be seen. Every wax figure had been put to bed standing, as it were, and was covered with a calico nightgown. Very ghostly was the appearance of the Grand Saloon in its canopy of dingy white. Brave as Lucy was, it would be nonsense to say she was not nervous. It was all so uncanny and hobgobliny that she was almost afraid to move.

Presently she remembered she was a little girl of courage, and stole softly along till she came to the center of the Grand Saloon, where she knew Mme. Tussaud was standing; but how could she tell the Little Old Woman in Black from the rest of the draped figures? And if she did find her, would she dare take the covering off?

The silence, the dim light, the dumb, shapeless forms, kept her heart in a flutter. Three

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or four times she had stopped in alarm, fancying that one or other of the wax figures had beckoned beneath its shroud, and was about to advance toward her. Motionless as they all were, they seemed to be stealthily watching her, and demanding to know what business she had to be there at such an hour.

Tremblingly the little girl peered this way and that, until she became quite bewildered, and began to fancy she had come to the wrong spot.

“Oh, dear!” she sobbed. “I wish it was lighter—or that the figures were n’t covered—or something! I wish Lorimer Grimweed had never been born! I wish—”

But her next wish was never uttered, for she was startled by an unmistakable movement in one of the figures. The calico wrapper trembled, fluttered, and fell to the ground, and to Lucy’s great joy there stood Mme. Tussaud, smiling.

“Why, there you are,” said the old lady, in the kindest tone. “I was beginning to fear that something had happened to you, or that you had been frightened and had run away.

I am glad you did n't. You look white, poor child!"

"I am all right now," said Lucy. "I *did* feel a little nervous as I came along."

"I don't wonder at it," said Mme. Tussaud. "If you had been here as many years as I have been, you would have grown accustomed to this sort of thing."

Her features were no longer fixed and motionless, as they had been during her previous conversation with Lucy: they were animated with a cheery expression, and her eyes twinkled with kindness; and when she stepped forward and stroked Lucy's cheek, the little girl did not shrink from the touch, it seemed so natural.

"Nobody noticed you, I hope, my dear?"

"No, ma'am," said Lucy.

"Lucy," said Mme. Tussaud, "I am dying for a pinch of snuff and a good long sneeze."

"Do you take snuff, ma'am?" asked the wondering Lucy.

"I can't live without it, my dear."

"Then why don't you take a pinch now?"

"I dare not," replied Mme. Tussaud, "till I have put two Beings out of the way." This

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cold-blooded declaration—as though the old lady were contemplating a murder, or rather two murders—made Lucy shiver. “Don’t be alarmed; they are quite used to it, and it will not hurt them the least bit in the world. The best of it is, they have no idea of what is being done to them. Ha! the first one approaches. Crouch, child, crouch, and keep as still as a mouse!”

Lucy obeyed, not without some apprehension, and clasped her hands over her eyes. What dreadful deed was about to be committed? From the end of the hall came the sound of measured footsteps. Was the Being a murderer who had escaped from the Chamber of Horrors, and would there be a struggle? Presently the sound of footsteps ceased, and all was quiet. Unable to restrain her curiosity, Lucy peeped timorously from her hiding-place.

Mme. Tussaud had taken up her old position, and was standing perfectly still; the Being was standing sideways, so that Lucy could not see his face. There was nothing threatening in his attitude; he appeared to be an ordinary person, dressed in the uniform of the exhibition. After pausing awhile, he resumed

his walk, apparently satisfied that everything was as it should be. He took just three steps—no more; for the moment his back was turned from Mme. Tussaud, that lady produced from beneath her skirt a slender, willowy cane, with which she touched the Being's shoulder.

The effect was magical. Instead of turning to see who wanted him, the Being was instantly deprived of the power of motion—so completely, indeed, that the foot he had lifted to take the next step remained suspended in the air.

Then Mme. Tussaud nodded smilingly to Lucy, and said in a cheerful tone:

“Get up, child; he cannot see you now.”

Lucy rose slowly to her feet, and pointing to the Being, asked in a trembling voice:

“What have you done to him? Is he dead?”

“As a door-nail, my dear,” replied Mme. Tussaud, with twinkling eyes,—and her eyes certainly had a wonderful twinkle in them,—“till I bring him to life again.”

“You can never do that,” sobbed Lucy.
“Oh, dear, oh, dear, you can never bring any-

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body to life after you have murdered him! It 's too, too dreadful!"

"You simple little darling!" exclaimed Mme. Tussaud, laughing heartily at Lucy's woe-begone expression, "You don't suppose I would commit murder, do you?"

"But look at him," said Lucy, unable to check her tears; "he can't move!"

"No, my dear, he can't, and that is what makes it so safe for us. If he could hear, or see, or speak, do you suppose he would allow me to do what I am going to do—for Lydia's sake, remember—without raising an alarm? He is one of my night watchmen, and a very trustworthy servant. Is it likely I would injure him? Do not be afraid; he will not hurt you."

She took Lucy's hand and led her up to the man, who stood motionless and looked for all the world like one of the wax figures in the show. Mme. Tussaud raised his arm, and it remained stationary; his head was turned to the right, and she turned it to the left; and the surprising thing was that while she did these things he offered no resistance whatever and the expression on his features never varied.

“Does he look as if I am hurting him, Lucy?” asked the old lady.

“No, ma’am.”

“I will show you something more curious.”

She reversed the cane, and touched first the foot which was raised in the air, and then the other. Then, still keeping hold of Lucy’s hand, she placed herself face to face with him, and slowly backed, beckoning him on with the cane. As if worked by machinery, he began to walk toward her as she continued to walk backward. But when she reversed the cane and touched him on the shoulder, he became fixed and motionless as before.

“What do you think of that, Lucy?” asked Mme. Tussaud.

“It is like magic,” Lucy replied.

“It *is* magic. This is a magic cane. Yes, my dear. It sends people to sleep as long as I wish them to sleep, and wakes them up again when I wish them to wake up.”

“And it *really* does n’t do them any harm?”

“Not the least. They are perfectly happy, and when they wake up they don’t know what has occurred, and don’t know that they have been asleep. They go on from where they left

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off just as if nothing had happened. When I bring this man to his senses he will continue his walk through the building in the most natural and unsuspecting manner. I could do just the same to you, Lucy."

"Oh, no," said Lucy, shaking her head.

"Oh, yes," said Mme. Tussaud, nodding hers. "As for my celebrities, I should n't be able to give them any relaxation, and should n't be able to keep them in order, without my cane. When they are obstinate I threaten them with it, and they immediately behave themselves."

"What a wonderful cane!" said Lucy.

"What a useful cane!" said Mme. Tussaud.

"When people are in that state," asked Lucy, pointing to the night watchman, "do they dream?"

"I will show you. Tell me the time." Mme. Tussaud took a pretty little old-fashioned gold watch from her waistband, and held it out to Lucy. "Take it in your hand."

Lucy did so. "What a lovely watch!" she exclaimed. "Why, it is only a quarter past eleven. I thought it was—"

CHAPTER IV

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

“ —much later,” said Lucy.

“ Much later than what? ” asked Mme. Tus-saud, smiling.

“ Than a quarter past eleven,” replied Lucy.

“ It is, my dear. Look again.”

Lucy looked at the watch, which she held in her outstretched hand, and, to her surprise, saw that it was twenty minutes to twelve.

“ How could I have made such a mistake? ” she said, rather bewildered.

“ It was no mistake. The fact is, you have been asleep for exactly twenty-five minutes.”

“ Asleep! Without my knowing it? Oh, you ’re making fun of me! ”

“ No, my dear. I touched you on the shoulder with my magic cane.”

“ Did you? I don’t remember it.”

“ They never do. I saw it distressed you

when I sent one of my night watchmen to sleep, so I thought I would dispose of the other without your seeing. Now, perhaps, you will have entire confidence in me, and take everything for granted till Lydia is made happy."

"Yes, I will, I will!"

"That 's right; we shall be able to get along splendidly. And be prepared for stranger things than you have already seen. I think I may now take my pinch of snuff with safety."

She took a large pinch, and then another, and sneezed three times violently.

"There!" said Mme. Tussaud, at last. "In my young days everybody took snuff. What have you in that paper bag?"

"The chocolate creams you told me to buy."

"So I did; but you have n't eaten many."

"No, ma'am. I saved most of them for the kings and queens. You said they liked them."

"Thoughtful Lucy! So they do. Thank you; they are quite refreshing. But you must keep more of them yourself. Though I do not like young people to be greedy, they ought to have their share of good things. Now, then, we must to work. We have to select the celebrities we shall take with us to Marybud Lodge.

I have decided upon one, and I brought him up from below while you were asleep. He is just behind you."

Lucy turned, and started back when she saw the Headsman from the tableau of the Execution of Mary Queen of Scots. He wore his mask, and was leaning on his ax.

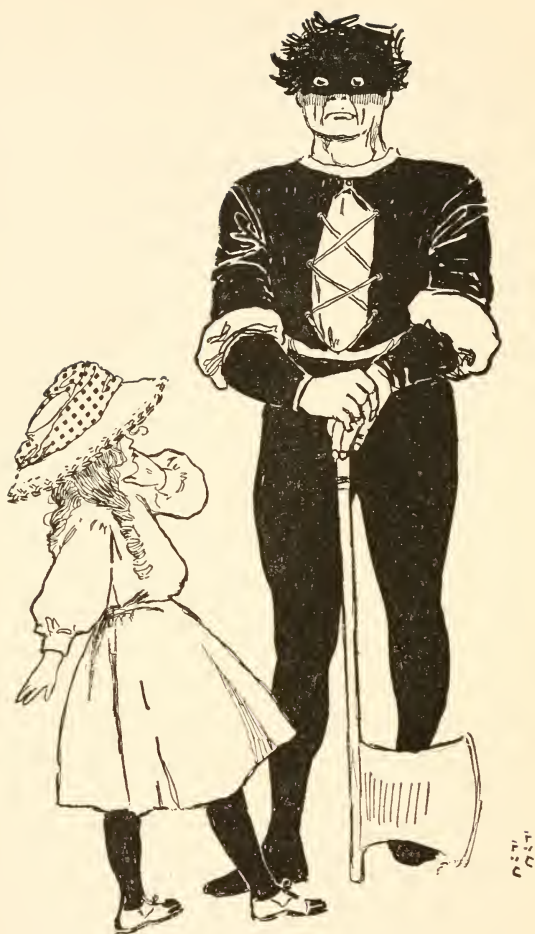
"Don't be frightened," said Mme. Tussaud. "He will do only what I order him to do."

"Oh, dear!" whispered Lucy, her heart beating very fast. "Will you order him to do anything?"

"I don't know," replied Mme. Tussaud, thoughtfully. "We shall be guided by events, and in any case he is a moral force. Only to look at him makes one shiver. When he is in Marybud Lodge I will keep him in the background as much as possible. He is one; now for the others. What do you think of King Henry VIII? Have you any objection to him?"

"Oh, no, ma'am," said Lucy, eagerly. "Shall I hear him speak?"

"He will have something to say for himself, I promise you," said Mme. Tussaud, with a chuckle. "Henry makes two." She checked



“ Lucy and the Headsman ”

them off on her fingers. "Queen Elizabeth, of course."

"If you please, ma'am," said Lucy, perceiving that Mme. Tussaud awaited her approval.

"She is three. Whom shall we have for the fourth? We will take Houqua, the famous Chinese tea-merchant, who objects to people taking sugar in their tea. Guy Fawkes shall be the fifth, which is rather appropriate,"—and here Mme. Tussaud laughed,—“for you have heard of gunpowder tea, have n't you?”

"Oh, yes," said Lucy.

"Then Richards I and III," continued Mme. Tussaud. "That makes seven. My Sleeping Beauty, Mme. Sainte Amaranthe, makes eight. She was one of the loveliest women in France, and is an immense attraction. Next, Oliver Cromwell—what do you say to him?"

"If you think so, ma'am," said Lucy.

"He will tone down the royal personages; they are inclined to get too uppish unless they have some kind of a check upon them. He makes nine. Charles II makes ten, and all my fingers are used up. Loushkin, the Russian giant, is eleven; he is eight feet five inches

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high, and will lend weight to the party. And, by way of balance, we will take General Tom Thumb—the most comical little gentleman! You will hear him say some very quaint and smart things. I love my little Tom.”

“I *should* like *him*!” said Lucy.

“You will get very fond of him. The next one must be a lady. Which would you prefer—Marie Antoinette or Mary Queen of Scots?”

“Oh, Mary Queen of Scots, please,” said Lucy, clapping her hands, but adding quickly, “if the executioner won’t chop off her head. You won’t let him, will you?”

“Indeed I will not. It would spoil my tableau. Extraordinary,” murmured Mme. Tussaud, “what a favorite that celebrity is! Mary shall accompany us, as you wish it. Will you come with me and fetch her, or remain here till I bring her up? I hardly know how she will behave, for she has never yet felt the touch of my magic cane.”

“I will go with you, please,” said Lucy.

“Very well. Come along.”

The brisk way in which the old lady walked filled Lucy with fresh wonder, and they were

soon down-stairs, standing before the tableau of the Execution.

“ I must leave you for half a minute,” said Mme. Tussaud.

The old lady glided to the back of the tableau, and in a few moments was standing by the side of Mary Queen of Scots, whose fair face was hidden by the kerchief tied across her eyes. Mme. Tussaud touched the shoulder of the kneeling queen with her magic cane.

A shiver ran through Mary's form, but she made no further movement until Mme. Tussaud unbound the kerchief from behind. As it fell to the ground she raised her head slightly, and turned it toward the spot where the executioner had stood. There was a sly and timid look in her beautiful eyes, followed by a gleam of joy upon seeing that the executioner had disappeared! Then she sprang to her feet, and cried in the sweetest voice in the world:

“ The wretch has gone—the wretch has gone! A reprieve—a reprieve! By the rood, 't is well! But oh, I have such a crick in my neck!”

She gazed in wonder at the motionless

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forms by which she was surrounded. Her eyes fell upon Mme. Tussaud, and she leaned forward and asked: "Who art thou? Surely not one of my tiring-women? Though I would not have those about me too fair. Hast lost thy tongue, dame? Who art thou? Speak!"

"Your Majesty will be well advised to follow me without further questioning," said Mme. Tussaud. "But if you would prefer to remain where you are—"

"Nay, nay! I am a-weary of this dungeon. But swear to me it is no new plot devised by my cousin Elizabeth—that thou art not sent by her for my destruction!"

"I am not in the habit of swearing," said Mme. Tussaud. "I am not sent by Elizabeth, and if you would once more taste the joys of life, obey me."

"Am I free, then? Am I free?" cried Mary.

"For a while," said Mme. Tussaud. "For how long a time depends upon your behavior."

"Know thy place, dame!" exclaimed Mary, haughtily.

"And learn to know yours, Queen Mary,"



“ The executioner had disappeared ! ”



retorted Mme. Tussaud. "You have had some sharp lessons; profit by them. Lucy, my dear, give her Majesty a chocolate cream."

"'T is toothsome," said Mary; "the flavor is new to me." Then she whispered to Lucy: "Thou art more to my taste than the ancient dame—thou art more *de bon air*. Hast thou another confiture? 'T is well—I thank thee. She called thee Lucie. I had a lady of that name who attended me when I was married to the Dauphin in the Church of Notre Dame. Art thou of royal blood?"

"Oh, no, your Majesty," said Lucy. She was walking now by the side of Mary, and Mme. Tussaud was leading the way to another part of the ground floor.

"Wilt thou serve me, Lucie?"

"Yes, faithfully," replied Lucy, eagerly.

"Alas!" sighed Mary. "So many have sworn that, only to betray me! Was ever lady born to such a destiny? To be a queen before I was a week old, to be betrothed before I was six, and married before I was sixteen! My beauty was a theme in all the courts of Europe. Wherever I appeared admirers sighed and languished at my feet. Pretty feet, are they

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not?" She put out one foot, then the other.

"What size dost thou wear, Mlle. Lucie?"

"Twos, your Majesty," said Lucy.

"I wear ones," said Mary, proudly. "And dost thou read, Mlle. Lucie? I have written sonnets in French and Italian. Doth not that set thee wondering? And thou shouldst see me touch the lute; thou wouldst never forget it. Poets have said my tresses are woven sunbeams and my eyes of star-like brightness. Cast thine own eyes upon them, and say whether thou thinkest them hazel or dark gray."

She was stooping, when Mme. Tussaud said in a sharp tone, "No loitering, Lucy; we have a deal of work to do. Remember Lydia."

This brought Lucy back to reality, and stopped the loquacious tongue of Mary Queen of Scots, who tossed her head and said haughtily:

"I wot my gentle words are ill bestowed."

Lucy's feelings were hurt, but greatly as she admired the beautiful queen, with her hair of light russet gold, Lydia came first. All the queens in the universe, ancient or modern, could not take the place of Lydia in her heart.

CHAPTER V

A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

THEY were now standing before the scene of the arrest of Guy Fawkes, and, as before, Mme. Tussaud entered the tableau from behind, and touched the figure of the conspirator with her cane. Queen Mary, who was standing by Lucy's side, uttered a scream of terror as Guy Fawkes instantly began to struggle violently with the waxen effigies of the men who held him.

"The woman is a witch!" she cried. "See, see! Nay, but 't is a man after my own heart. How valiantly he resists the ruffians who hold him! Ah, me! I, too, have been a prisoner struggling for freedom. Bravely done! By my troth, he hath overcome them all!"

In fact, the wax figures were not capable of resistance, and Guy Fawkes had thrown them without difficulty, though he made huge parade of his prowess. Then, crying out, "Ha!

there is yet time to fire the gunpowder!" he turned sharply, and perceiving Mme. Tussaud, burst suddenly into a hoarse chuckle.

"Guy!" exclaimed Mme. Tussaud, severely, "I am displeased with you. This is the third time you have behaved in this fashion when I touched you with my cane. When *will* you learn that these poor fellows are merely dummies? One of these days you will do them an injury, and put me to a great deal of unnecessary expense."

"Nay, Mistress Tussaud, you overblame me," protested Guy Fawkes, in a husky whisper. "Each time that I awake and find myself in the grasp of these minions, how can I but believe that I am once more trapped outside the Parliament House, as I was on the 4th of November in the year 1605?"

"I dare say," retorted Mme. Tussaud, dryly, "but, all the same, I warn you to take more care in future. You are a turbulent fellow, Guy."

"I am a soldier of fortune, mistress, pray remember that," said Guy Fawkes, "and who pays me best may command me."

"Nothing of the sort," said Mme. Tussaud.

“ Please to remember that you are *my* exclusive property. Now just set those men on their feet again, and come along.”

Lucy could not help feeling a little alarmed when the notorious conspirator joined them, and she trembled as, at a sign from Mme. Tussaud, she offered him her bag of chocolate creams. The eyes of Guy Fawkes gleamed as he helped himself. He would have seized the bag had not Mme. Tussaud prevented him.

“ Little mistress,” he said to Lucy, in a mysterious whisper, “ hast thou an enemy thou art anxious to get rid of? For yon parcel of confections I will dispose of him in such a fashion that he will never trouble thee again. Say but the word, and I am at thy service.”

“ No, thank you, sir,” said Lucy, in a shaking voice, for she did not wish even Lorimer Grimweed such a fate as that, and she shrank toward Mme. Tussaud, who took her hand and, bidding the others follow, said, as they proceeded to the upper room:

“ Don’t be alarmed, Lucy. I have Guy well under control, and there is no gunpowder in the place.”

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“ Why does he speak in whispers all the time? ” asked Lucy. “ Has he a cold? ”

“ No, my dear ; he does it from habit. It is part of a conspirator’s trade.”

Meanwhile Mary Queen of Scots was looking at Guy Fawkes out of the corner of her eye, and presently she drew closer to him and said in a low voice :

“ Is it true that thou art a conspirator? ”

“ That is my profession, madame,” whispered Guy Fawkes ; “ and assuredly I behold in the illustrious Queen of Scots one who has herself been engaged in conspiracies? ”

“ Nay, ’t is a base slander ! ” said Mary, loudly, looking askance at Mme. Tussaud. “ For I am innocent of those vile plots of which I have been falsely accused ! ” Then, with her finger at her lips, she leaned toward him and murmured, “ Hist, good Master Fawkes ! We will speak together anon.”

Guy Fawkes nodded craftily and rubbed his hands with satisfaction.

By this time they had reached the Grand Saloon, and Mary shuddered when she saw the dread form of the executioner. She clung to Lucy as if for protection, and muttered :

"I misdoubt me. Is this a snare?"

"Don't be frightened at him," said Lucy; "he will not hurt you. And oh, dear queen, do not disobey the kind old lady! Your fate is in her hands, and she is so good, so good!"

"By my faith, thy words are strange," said Mary, "but I will trust thee. If there is a plot against me I count upon thy aid. This is a wondrous hall, and though the light is dim, I am more content here than below. We had no such hall in Holyrood."

"Your Majesty will pledge me your royal word," said Mme. Tussaud, approaching Mary, "to remain on this spot till I give you permission to move from it."

"Nay, that I will not," said Mary. "It is for me to command."

"Not in this establishment," said Mme. Tussaud, in a determined tone. "If you decline to give the promise I shall convey you back to your scaffold."

Impressed by the stern voice, Mary turned irresolutely to Lucy, who nodded earnestly and said in a wistful tone:

"Yes, you must, you must indeed, Queen

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Mary! She has the kindest heart in the world, and has the power to do all she says."

"The kindest heart in the world!" muttered Mary, with a cross look. "No, no; she is a witch. We were wont to burn them at the stake, or give them trial by water. Natheless we feared them.—Mistress, I pledge my word."

CHAPTER VI

ALL ALIVE! ALL ALIVE, O!

THEN Mme. Tussaud proceeded with her plan. With astonishing ease she removed the wrapper from Henry VIII, and touched him on the breast. Mary uttered a little cry of wonder and admiration as, with a mighty shake of his broad shoulders, he stepped from out the royal group.

“Mme. la Tussaud,” he said, in a hearty voice, as if continuing a conversation, “we were about to say that if thou wert younger—*much* younger—we should consider whether we would make thee our seventh. Thou art, alas! too old—”

“And you too fickle, Henry,” said Mme. Tussaud, the familiar manner in which she addressed him denoting that she was no more in awe of him than of Queen Mary.

Henry laughed heartily at the retort, and Lucy thought she had never heard a laugh so

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jovial. The joke seemed to tickle him immensely.

“’T is agreed,” he said. “We will not make a match of it. Gadzooks! A winsome little wench!” He chuckled Lucy under the chin, and stroked his yellow beard complacently, his face beaming with good nature.

“Offer his Majesty a chocolate cream, Lucy,” said Mme. Tussaud.

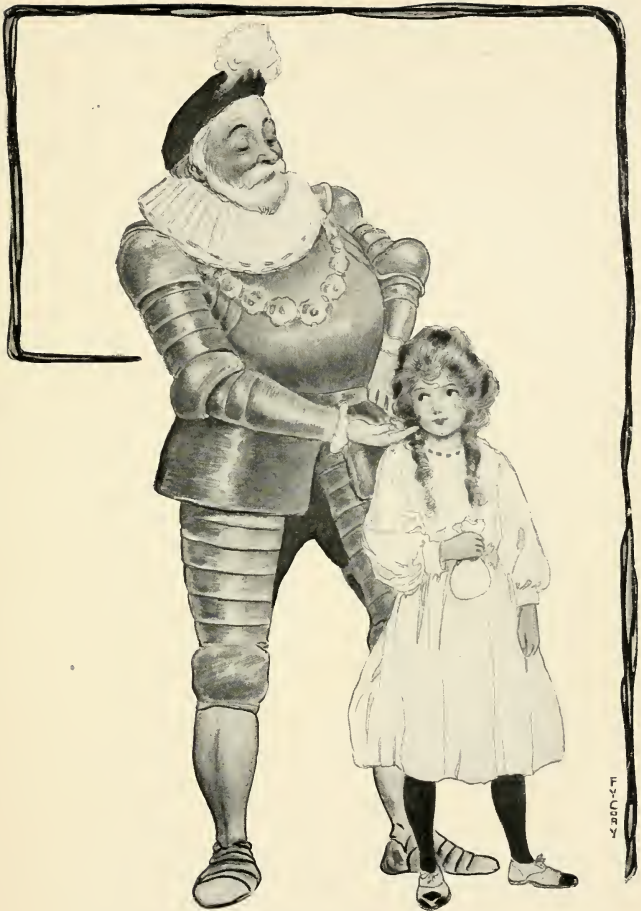
“Chocolate creams!” he cried eagerly. “Num, num! Thou art a very fairy. Nay, sweet demoiselle, one will not suffice. We will take the whole bag.”

“No more than three, Harry,” said Mme. Tussaud, who saw that Lucy was wavering. “It is as many as we can spare.”

She counted them out in his mailed hand, and he, turning, saw Mary Queen of Scots.

“Beshrew me!” he exclaimed. “Whom have we here? ’T is long since we beheld a face so fair.”

“’T is my cousin Elizabeth’s father,” said Mary, under her breath. “I have seen his portrait, painted by that famous master, Hans Holbein the younger. It is—it *is* the great Henry himself! He approaches—he comes nearer! Be still, my fluttering heart!”



“ ‘A winsome little wench!’ He chucked
Lucy under the chin.”



"Let me introduce you," said Mme. Tussaud. "Henry VIII—Mary Queen of Scots." An elaborate obeisance and a still more elaborate bow followed the introduction. "You will no doubt enjoy each other's acquaintance. And I have a great holiday entertainment in store for your Majesties if you follow my wishes."

"Say you so? It likes us well," observed the monarch. "We trust the lovely Mary hath a part in thy project."

"I promise you that," said Mme. Tussaud. "Perhaps you will be kind enough to remain with the Queen of Scots while I proceed with my affairs?"

"We desire nothing better," said Henry, "than to remain by beauty's side."

"Oh, sire!" simpered Queen Mary.

Mme. Tussaud beckoned to Lucy, and said confidentially as they walked away from the pair:

"Henry and I are very good friends, and so are most of the others we shall take with us to Marybud Lodge. I have occasionally to be rather severe, but I think I may say that I have established my authority over them—

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yes, even over Queen Elizabeth and Richard III. Queen Bess was most difficult to deal with, but I succeeded in managing her in the end. Here she is. If we find her a little stiff and proud at first, we must not forget that she was a great queen, and used to command."

Lucy could scarcely keep herself still as the magic cane touched the royal shoulder. Queen Elizabeth raised her head and gazed imperiously at Mme. Tussaud, but she did not otherwise move.

"If your Majesty pleases," said Mme. Tussaud, "we must not keep the company waiting."

"'T is well," said Queen Elizabeth. "We take thy word for it. Look to it that thou dost not deceive us."

And then the great queen stepped majestically out of the royal circle in which she was, perhaps, the most illustrious figure. Lucy gazed upon her with awe, and it was only at the instigation of Mme. Tussaud that she timorously held out her bag of chocolate creams, and even then she drew back in fear, dreading that the act might be resented as an unwarrantable familiarity.

"Don't be shy, Lucy," said Mme. Tussaud.

Thus encouraged, Lucy, with a curtsy, offered half a dozen chocolate creams to Queen Elizabeth, who graciously accepted the gift. It was evident, however, from her manner that she did not approve of Henry VIII's attentions to Mary Queen of Scots.

"Our royal father," she observed, as she glanced at the pair, "should set a better example."

"Nay, Bess, do not frown," said Henry, in a jolly voice. "If our devotion to the fair offend thee, observe it not."

He turned again to Mary, whose laughter the next moment rang through the hall.

"Ah, here is Mme. Sainte Amaranthe," said Mme. Tussaud. "Good evening, Julie." She had touched the Sleeping Beauty with her magic cane.

"Good evening, madame," said the young beauty, languidly raising herself from her couch. "Have I overslept myself? I am somewhat fatigued after the impromptu ball at which you kindly presided last night."

"You should not be, Julie," said Mme. Tussaud, "for you sat out three successive

dances with George Washington. I heard Anne of Cleves and Catherine Howard making remarks about it."

"Oh, I don't mind what people say," returned Mme. Sainte Amaranthe, shrugging her shoulders. "Washington's manners were most fascinating, and I had become mortally tired after the pedantic conversation of Geoffrey Chaucer and John Knox."

"Really?" said Mme. Tussaud, laughing. "But come, come! We are lingering too long. I want to introduce you to one of our great English monarchs, an ardent admirer of female beauty."

The young lady sprang to her feet with more vivacity than she had yet displayed, exclaiming, "And I have not made my toilette!" She began hurriedly to arrange her veil, her laces, and the long diamond chain which encircled her lovely neck.

"You will do very well as you are," said Mme. Tussaud. "Your Majesty,"—they had now reached the royal group,—“allow me to introduce a friend of mine, Julie Sainte Amaranthe. We were girls together."

"Impossible, madame," said Henry VIII,

gazing admiringly at the young beauty, and then with twinkling eyes at the Little Old Woman in Black. "By my halidom! thou taxest our credulity too far!" And with an air of great gallantry, he kissed the hand of the French lady, and paid her many pretty compliments.

"I love to listen to him," said Lucy to Mme. Tussaud, as they walked away. "Don't you think it is much prettier than the way we speak now?"

"It has its attractions," replied Mme. Tussaud, "and certainly the slang of the modern day is to be deplored. And bad habits are so catching. Even I find myself occasionally betrayed into using language that I should have blushed to use thirty or forty years ago. I am afraid we are less dignified and courteous than we used to be."

Having reached the group in which Houqua, the great tea-merchant, was placed, she touched him with her magic cane, and he immediately took from the folds of his thickly wadded dark-blue robe a fan, with which he began to fan himself. Then he spoke:

"Put not thlee, four, five lumps of sugar in

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your tea. No can do so many lumps. Spoilee flaglance of the golden leaf." His eyes rested upon Lucy, who held out two chocolate creams, which instantly disappeared, as if by magic, up his sleeve. "Pletty child!" he said. "Bime-by glow up a beautiful lady with tiny feet."

"There's a compliment for you, Lucy," said Mme. Tussaud, and leading her to other parts of the show, introduced her in turn to Richards I and III, Cromwell, Loushkin the Russian giant, nearly nine feet high, Tom Thumb the American dwarf, and Charles II, to each of whom Lucy offered a couple of chocolate creams, Cromwell being the only one who declined to accept them. The disdain with which he surveyed the royal personages was not less marked than the displeasure which his appearance created. The only celebrity he regarded with any favor was the giant Loushkin.

"Give me a company of such men," he had the audacity to declare, "and I would sweep royalty from the face of the earth."

Charles II stepped forward and looked daggers at the Protector.

“Ha!” said Cromwell. “An I had laid hands on thee I would have served thee as I served thy father. The good work I did lives after me. Yea, verily!”

“Wretch!” cried Mary Queen of Scots.

“Peace!” roared Cromwell, turning to Mary. “Thou saucy malapert!”

“I take this quarrel on myself,” said Richard Cœur de Lion, darting forward. “Dash it—that is, ’sdeath!—I cannot get my glove off!”

“Here ’s a good blade for who will pay for it,” hissed Guy Fawkes, his hand on his sword.

“Oh, there ’s going to be a fight,” cried Mary, dancing up and down in glee; “there ’s going to be a fight—and all about me!”

“Affected creature!” murmured Mme. Sainte Amaranthe.

“Hooray for Guy Fawkes!” said General Tom Thumb. “Hello, Cromwell, how are you?”

“Out of my sight, manikin!” thundered Cromwell, and gave a start of agony, for Tom Thumb had run a pin into his leg.

“Stop—stop—stop!” cried Mme. Tussaud, pushing her way to the center of the group.

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“ Another quarrelsome word, and I— Would you make me ashamed of my celebrities? It is perfectly scandalous that famous personages should behave so. And how is it possible for me to carry out my plans for the holiday excursion I am going to give you—”

“ A holiday excursion!” they all cried, as though with one tongue.

“ Yes. I want to take you all into the country for a few days—”

“ Oh, you dear creature!” exclaimed Mary.

“ A *fête champêtre!*” cried Mme. Sainte Amaranthe, delightedly.

“—to rescue a fair damsel in distress.”

“ By my troth!” exclaimed Henry VIII, “ this is something after my own heart.”

“ But how can it be done if you continue to wrangle? It is perhaps too much to expect you all to shake hands with one another, but you can at least keep the peace and pretend to be friends.”

“ Oh, yes,” said Mary, ecstatically; “ let ’s pretend. Oliver Cromwell, I apologize.”

“ Bosh! and in pretense so do I,” said the Protector.

“ In that case, colonel,” said Tom Thumb,

addressing Cromwell, "I will take the pin out of your leg." And he did so.

"Pretend in earnest, you know," said Mme. Tussaud. "Is harmony restored? Are you all friends?"

"We are—we are," they all replied, one and all earnestly pretending, in order not to offend Mme. Tussaud, and thus endanger their chances of joining in the holiday excursion.

CHAPTER VII

QUEEN ELIZABETH AND TOM THUMB FALL TO QUOTING SHAKSPERE

THEN Mme. Tussaud, rapping her cane smartly on the floor to obtain silence, explained to her celebrities the purpose of the expedition they were about to undertake, and impressed upon them the necessity of obedience to her commands.

“I have made my plans, and I do not intend that they shall be upset,” she said, in a tone of stern authority, “so let us have no nonsense. To show you that I know how to deal with rebellion, I may as well respectfully inform you, celebrities, that I take my executioner with me, and have entered into a contract with him at so much per head.”

She pointed to the grim figure with the black mask on his face and his sharp ax ready. Some of the celebrities looked rather glum, but there was no mistaking the effect

produced by this announcement. Even Richard III and Guy Fawkes entered no protest, and Queen Elizabeth was so elated at the prospect of an open-air holiday that she bestowed a gracious smile on Lucy.

"We must prepare to start," said Mme. Tussaud. "There is yet much to do before we leave, for the interests of my show must not be neglected. I expect there will be such a rush for admission to-morrow that the money-boxes will overflow with shillings."

"What, with us, the principal attractions, out of it?" cried Mary. She really meant, "with ME, the principal attraction, out of it," but, vain as she was, she hardly liked to go as far as that.

"Yes," answered Mme. Tussaud, "with you, the principal attractions, out of it. In the way of record attendances, bank-holidays will pale their ineffectual fires—"

"An incorrect quotation!" interrupted Queen Elizabeth, with astonishing vivacity. "In the singular, not the plural—fire, not fires. And *uneffectual*, not *ineffectual*."

'The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his *uneffectual* fire.'

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It vexes us to the soul when our divine William is misquoted."

"Hooray for you, Queen Elizabeth!" said Tom Thumb. "In the names of Edwin Forrest and Edwin Booth, the American Eagle thanks the good Queen Bess; the Stars and Stripes salute her.

'Sound, drums and trumpets, boldly and cheerfully:
God and St. George! Richmond and victory!'

Begging your pardon, boss," continued the tiny man, seeing a scowl on the face of Richard III, "for throwing Richmond in your teeth; but history's history, and I don't want a better historian than the Swan of Avon. He's good enough for yours truly—yes, *sir!*"

"Varlet!" muttered Richard, "an I had thee in the Tower—" But the conclusion of the threat was not audible, and as much of it as Tom Thumb heard had little effect upon him, his little fat cheeks smiled so amiably.

"We accept thy homage, Tom of the Thumb," said Queen Elizabeth, "and if our royal cousin is displeased, we will say instead,



“ ‘Thou hast not many inches,’ said Queen Elizabeth, smiling sweetly on him, ‘but thou art “a marvelous proper man.” ’ ”



quoting from our favorite poet, and venturing to alter two words in the original,

‘Sound, drums and trumpets, and to Barnet all;
And more such nights as these to us befall.’”

“Good! good!” said Tom Thumb, with nods of approval. “Queen Elizabeth, you’re a daisy!”

“Hush, Tom! Now is every one ready?” asked Mme. Tussaud.

“‘As ready as a borrower’s cap,’” said Tom Thumb, quoting from Shakspeare again.

“Thou hast not many inches,” said Queen Elizabeth, smiling sweetly on him, “but thou art ‘a marvelous proper man.’ Where didst thou learn to become so familiar with the writings of our great Shakspeare?”

“The free and enlightened citizens of the U-nited States are chock-full of him, queen,” replied Tom.

“Softly!” said Mme. Tussaud. “Follow me.”

With footsteps as noiseless as those of a company of cats, they stole out of the hall, and were presently in the open air, crouching in silence within the rails, in obedience to the commands of the mistress of the show.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LITTLE OLD WOMAN IN BLACK FILLS THE VACANT PLACES

THE night was dark: there were no stars or moon visible; and it being now one o'clock in the morning, Marylebone Road was almost deserted.

"You have seen many strange things, Lucy," said Mme. Tussaud, in a low tone, "and have behaved bravely. You will see still stranger things before we start for Marybud Lodge; but no one will be hurt, and, whatever happens, you must not scream."

"I will not, ma'am," said Lucy. "It has all been very, very wonderful, but I am not the least bit frightened."

"You are a dear little heroine," said Mme. Tussaud, with a bright smile. "What I have to do now is to find my way to the Finchley Road, for the London streets are changed

since I was last in them. Then it is straight on to Barnet, is it not?"

"Almost straight. As we go along I think I can show you."

"Very good, then. Celebrities, keep perfectly still, and do not open your lips unless I speak to you. Hush! A policeman!"

With measured steps the guardian of the night approached the gates of the exhibition. He paused, shook them to see that they were fast, and passed leisurely on.

"Safe!" sighed Mary Queen of Scots, who had been terrified by the approach of the man.

"Not a word, not a word," whispered Mme. Tussaud, "and do not stir."

She glided swiftly out into the street, and hailed the officer.

"Policeman!" she cried.

He stopped and faced her, but in the darkness could see before him only the figure of a little old woman.

"Can you tell me the way to the Finchley Road?" asked Mme. Tussaud.

"Take the second turning to the right," the policeman answered, "into Baker Street, walk straight on, and ask again."

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“ I don’t wish to ask again. Am I sure to come to it if I walk straight on? ”

“ Yes, if you can *keep* straight. When you come to the park gates, keep to the left, and you ’ll come to Wellington Road, and that ’ll lead you into Finchley Road.” At this point the policeman’s mind became suddenly illuminated with suspicion. “ But here, I say—what brings you out at this time of night, and where did you spring from? I did n’t see you as I came along. Did you come up through the pavement? And what ’s that you are holding behind your back? None of your tricks with me—let ’s have a look at it. Sharp, now! ”

“ It is only a cane,” said Mme. Tussaud, producing it.

“ Only a cane, eh? Where did you get it? ” He pulled out his bull’s-eye lantern and flashed it upon her face. And that was all he did, for Mme. Tussaud had touched him with her magic cane. Immovable he stood, without sense or feeling, holding his lantern in his outstretched hand.

“ One! ” said Mme. Tussaud, under her breath, and also stood quite still, for she heard a voice in the rear singing softly:

“ I ’ve got a pal,
 A reg’lar out-an’-outer;
 She ’s a dear good gal—
 I ’ll tell yer all about ’er.
 It ’s many years since fust we met—”

The singer, a jovial young costermonger returning home after a jolly evening spent with friends, stopped short and cried:

“ ’Allo! Ho, I say! ’Ere ’s a lark! Wot ’s the row, bobby? ”

It was not destined that he should be informed. The magic cane had touched him, and he stood stock-still, with a vacant smile on his face.

“ Two! ” said Mme. Tussaud, hurrying back to her celebrities. “ I need recruits, stalwart men, resolute and stout,” she said hurriedly. Tom Thumb darted forward. “ Not you, Tom; you could not perform the work. Cromwell for one; and, Loushkin, you come too.”

The giant and Cromwell followed Mme. Tussaud immediately, and, in obedience to her instructions, carried the inanimate forms of the policeman and the young man of the period into the building, she showing the way with the policeman’s bull’s-eye lantern, of

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which she had taken possession. Then she passed out of the gates again, taking her recruits with her. She kept them busy, for every minute or two they came back, bearing the forms of various human beings who had been deprived of sense and motion by the touch of the magic cane. Altogether thirteen substitutes were collected, and, under Mme. Tussaud's direction, were carried into the show and placed where the celebrities she had revived had previously sat or stood. When they were covered with the calico shrouds which had enveloped the abstracted celebrities, the hall presented precisely the same appearance as when the attendants had closed the exhibition for the night. There was, however, one exception. The place which had been occupied by Mme. Tussaud was not filled. At a casual glance this was not apparent, for she so arranged the cloth in which she had been inwrapped that it looked as if she were still within its folds.

Once during these comings and goings she noticed that Lucy's face was very white and that the little girl was trembling. She put her

arm around Lucy's neck and kissed her, and whispered:

"There is no harm done, my dear. I have only sent them to sleep, as I did my night watchmen, and when I wake them up they will be as well as ever."

The last thing to do inside the building was to restore the night watchmen to their senses. This done, they resumed their march through the rooms in the most natural manner possible, without any suspicion that there had been any break in the performance of their duties; and when they cast their eyes around upon the muffled figures, they were quite satisfied that everything was as they had left it.

While attending to these various matters Mme. Tussaud had displayed the most astonishing activity and vivacity, and every time she passed in and out of the building, she addressed a few pleasant words to this celebrity, or a few warning words to that, and succeeded in keeping up their spirits as effectually as she kept up her own.

"And now," she said in the end, addressing them collectively, "everything is ready for the start to Marybud Lodge."

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“ But how do we go? ” asked Lucy. “ What will the policemen say when they see us marching through the streets? And it is such a long distance! ”

“ Oh, if it is far we can never walk,” cried the ladies. “ Look at our thin shoes! ”

“ We shall ride,” said Mme. Tussaud, smiling. “ Loushkin will drive us. You, Lucy, will sit by his side and direct him, and I will sit next to you.”

“ Ride! ” exclaimed Lucy. “ In what? Oh, I know! ” And all her pulses throbbed with delight. “ You have found some large pumpkins.”

“ Come and see.”

Her celebrities accompanied her to the outside pavement, and there in the road was a large, red, covered parcels-post van, with two stout horses standing perfectly still.

“ This conveyance was coming along, and I annexed it,” said Mme. Tussaud. “ The man who drove it is now in my show. I judge from his uniform that he belongs to the government, and I will see that it is safely restored. It was necessary to annex the van, for I could not suffer my celebrities to walk

eight or ten miles at this time of night—no, indeed!”

“Certainly not, certainly not,” was the general acquiescence.

“Come, get in, all of you. You ’ll find it warm and comfortable inside.”

“Take your places,” shouted Tom Thumb.

“Step up on the box, Loushkin, and take the reins. Oliver Cromwell, oblige me by lifting our little heroine up. Thank you. If I ever hear any one accusing you of a want of politeness, I will set them right. Get inside, please.”

“All aboard!” cried Tom Thumb. “There are no more passengers, marm. We ’ve got the lot. I ’ve checked ’em all off.”

“Smart little man,” said Mme. Tussaud.

She shut the door upon him and the others, locked it, pocketed the key, and nimbly mounted the box. Then she touched the horses with her magic cane, and they instantly whisked their tails and moved briskly up the street.

“Just show them the whip, Loushkin. Are you comfortable, Lucy?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Then off we go,” said the Little Old Woman.

And away they rattled in the direction of Barnet.

As they wended their way northward there were still fewer persons abroad than in the neighborhood of Marylebone Road, and, so far as the occupants of the box-seat could judge, they were not observed. In daylight it would, of course, have been otherwise. The appearance of a giant nearly nine feet in height, in the military uniform of a drum-major of the Imperial Preobrajensky Regiment of the Russian guards, driving a post-office mail-cart, would certainly have attracted attention; but on this night only one man, a policeman who was turning out of Park Road, stopped to look after the vehicle. He was not in doubt about the conveyance or the horses, but about the Being on the box.

“Was it a image?” he asked himself, and paused till the cart was out of sight. He lifted his eyes to the tops of the trees, and for the first time in his life noticed how much higher they seemed to be by night than by day. “That is it,” he soliloquized; “it was the tree-tops that

made him look so tall. He might have been a shadder."

So the conveyance passed along unimpeded. Along the Wellington Road into Finchley Road, past the Swiss Cottage and the nice new shops with which the Parade beyond is lined, past the pretty villas which were being built all the way to Finchley, the horses trotted merrily, as though they were aware of the distinguished company they were carrying and were proud of their burden. Lucy's sharp eyes were on the lookout for familiar landmarks, and it was under her guidance that the journey was made. Strange to say, she did not feel tired or sleepy. The exciting events of the day and night had dispelled all sensations of fatigue, and she was as bright at two o'clock in the morning, sitting on the box between Loushkin and Mme. Tussaud, as if it were yet day. Odd as were the circumstances in which she found herself placed, she was very happy in the prospect held out by Mme. Tussaud, and she kept whispering to herself: "It's all for dear Lydia's sake—all for my dear, darling sister."

Merrily rang the clatter of the hoofs on the

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road, and the horses champed their bits and shook their heads as if they were enjoying it; but they were not sorry when Loushkin pulled up to give them a drink from a water-trough by the roadside; and while they slaked their thirst, Mme. Tussaud got nimbly down from the box to see how her celebrities were getting along. Henry VIII was listening with great attention to a conversation between Mary Queen of Scots and Mme. Sainte Amaranthe upon the fashions of ladies' dress and what styles were most becoming to fair and dark complexions. Richard III's eyes were half closed, but he was only pretending to be asleep, and his brain was really teeming with plots; occasionally he muttered a few words to Guy Fawkes, who received his remarks with an air of mingled bravado and mystery, while Charles II was regarding them with an air of haughty disapproval. Cromwell and Richard I were discussing military affairs. Queen Elizabeth and Tom Thumb were quoting Shakspeare. Houqua was smiling blandly upon one and all; and the executioner sat bolt upright, his eyes glaring frightfully through his mask.

"How are you getting along, good people?" asked Mme. Tussaud, letting the light of the bull's-eye lamp travel from one to another.

"Bully!" said Tom Thumb, briskly. "If you find it cold outside, there 's plenty of room for you and the little girl in here."

"We are quite comfortable on the box-seat, thank you, Tom. I trust your Majesty does not feel wearied."

"We are well bestowed," said Queen Elizabeth, with a gracious inclination of her head. "Thou hast given us an agreeable henchman. Raleigh himself was not a more accomplished courtier, and knew less of Sweet Will than Tom of the Thumb." She turned to the little man. "Who spake those words of our poet, Tom of the Thumb, which but now thou wast repeating?"

"They were from Suffolk's lines," answered Tom Thumb, "when he was playing false to Henry VI, in his interview with Lady Margaret. Don't you remember?"

"Ha! those knavish ambassadors!" exclaimed Queen Elizabeth. "We have had experience of them. We recall the lines—

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they are in our poet's play of 'Henry VI.' But thy memory is prodigious, gallant Tom of the Thumb; marvelous is thy erudition. Fain would our eyes rest upon the wonderful country in which thou wert born and educated."

"In education it takes the cake, queen," said Tom Thumb, "and a visit from you would set all the bells ringing from Maine to California. You are as greatly honored there as in the cities and green lanes of England."

"From our green lanes, sweet and fragrant as they will ever be, we send it greeting. We recollect our sea-dog Sir Francis Drake, when we visited him upon his ship, the 'Golden Hind,' speaking in glowing terms of those wondrous western shores, upon some spot of which he unfurled our flag, calling the land New Albion. But let us not desert the pages of our Swan of Avon. Proceed with thy illustration."

Before the end of this dialogue, Mme. Tussaud having remounted to the box-seat, the journey was resumed. The nearer they approached Barnet, the surer was Lucy of the

road, and after a merry canter of three or four miles she cried excitedly:

“We shall be there very soon now. Oh, what will Lydia say when she sees us—and what will papa think? Mr. Loushkin, please take the road to the left. There—there is Marybud Lodge right before us. Stop, coachman, stop!”

The van was pulled up within half a dozen yards of a stone wall, about eight feet high, with a wooden door built in it. By the side of the door hung a rusty iron chain, and on it was a great iron knocker. There appeared to be no other means of entrance than this door.

Mme. Tussaud alighted from the box-seat so quickly that she seemed to fly off it, and assisted Lucy down. Then she unlocked the door of the van and let out her celebrities, who stepped to the ground with expressions of satisfaction at having reached their journey's end.

“Where dwells the fair Lydia?” said Henry VIII, in a loud, commanding voice. “We see no house. A murrain on the knaves! Is this the manner in which we are

received? In silence? No welcome proffered? By my troth! an the entertainment within be not better than the entertainment without, there will be work for the headsman. 'T is well he accompanied us, Mme. la Tussaud."

"Let us talk sense, Henry," was the answer he received.

"Sense!" he roared. "Do we not talk sense? We are starving. An thou wilt proffer us a flagon and a pasty we will talk sense enow. What ho, within there! What ho! Is there no horn at the gate to summon the knaves?" He was about to hammer on the door when Mme. Tussaud seized his arm.

"For shame, Harry, for shame! You will arouse the enemy and frustrate the plans I have so carefully prepared." She stamped her foot. "Understand me, Harry; I will not have it!"

"What is it, then, thou 'lt have, if thou 'lt not have that?" he demanded.

"Your counsel and advice, Hal, which you cannot give if you work yourself into a passion. Come, now, be sensible."

"As thou wilt," he said, in a milder tone.

"We were ever the slave of thy fickle sex.
And what is 't that 's afoot now?"

"We have to decide how to get into Marybud Lodge," said Mme. Tussaud. "Lucy, is this the front entrance?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Is there no other?"

"There is the servants' door at the back."

"Does this stone wall stretch right round the Lodge?"

"Yes, ma'am, right round."

Mme. Tussaud was not sorry to hear it. It insured privacy; prying neighbors could not watch and take note of their movements.

"Let us reconnoiter," she said softly.

CHAPTER IX

OVER THE GARDEN WALL

THEY proceeded in a body, Mme. Tus-saud heading the procession and showing the way with the bull's-eye lantern. Marybud Lodge and grounds formed quite a little estate, occupying about twenty-five acres, and it took the queer company several minutes to skirt the wall, which, as Lucy had informed them, completely inclosed the property. The servants' door at the back was of solid oak, and there was not a chink to peep through; neither was there any loophole in the stone wall through which they could peer into the grounds.

"We must carry the place by assault," said Oliver Cromwell.

"An we had a battering-ram with us," said Richard I, "the task would be much simpler."

"We will hammer on the postern," said

Guy Fawkes, "and when it is opened, though but the tenth part of an inch, I, being to the fore, will push my way in and slay the senechal."

"No, no, no!" cried Lucy. "It would be cruel—cruel! Poor old Rowley has the rheumatism."

"Being old and rheumatic," said Richard III, with a sardonic smile, "he is the more easily disposed of. One twist of his neck with these fingers, and there 's an end of him."

"No, no, no!" Lucy continued to protest. "You must not hurt poor Rowley." And then she said passionately: "I believe all I have read about you—yes, I do. So there!"

"If we made our presence known," said Cromwell, "would not one of the maids respond to our summons?"

"No, sir. Rowley always opens the door at night."

"What post doth Rowley hold, sweetheart?" asked Henry VIII.

"He is our gardener, please your Majesty."

"As none of our plans seem to suit this froward minx," said Richard III, "we will

set fire to the place and roast the inmates in their beds."

"You monster, you monster!" sobbed Lucy. "Oh, why did you let such a cruel king come along, Mme. Tussaud?"

"Don't distress yourself, child," said the old lady. "No one shall be hurt."

"An we had picks," said Richard I, "we could make a subterranean passage."

"There is no time for that," said Mme. Tussaud. "Besides, we have no picks."

"Is there a scaling-ladder at hand?" asked Cromwell.

At mention of a scaling-ladder Mme. Tussaud looked up at Loushkin. "Can you see over the wall, Loushkin?"

"Very nearly," he replied, tiptoeing. "It is too dark to see much, but it looks to me as if the ground was higher on the other side."

"I have it," said Mme. Tussaud. "We must climb the garden wall."

"Impossible!" cried Queen Elizabeth. "We are not cats."

"There is no other way. Loushkin shall be our ladder. We will climb up on his shoul-

ders, step upon the wall, and jump into the grounds."

"Well said, madame; an excellent device!" exclaimed Henry VIII.

"No device is excellent," said Queen Elizabeth, frowning, "with the rabble looking on."

"Rabble!" exclaimed Mary Queen of Scots, bridling up. "Rabble thyself, madame!"

"Have a care, Mary," said Elizabeth, warningly, in answer. "The headsman waits for our behest."

"He is *my* executioner, Elizabeth," interposed Mme. Tussaud, "and obeys no orders but mine. What is resolved upon must be carried out. Can any one suggest a better plan for obtaining entrance?"

"There is no better," said Richard I. "Our royal cousin must needs forego her scruples."

"We yield to superior force," replied the haughty queen; "but nath'less we will not forget. A day will come!"

"But now to get over the wall," said Mme. Tussaud, interrupting. "Lucy, can the first

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person who enters the grounds unlock the gate from the inside?"

"No, ma'am. Papa takes the keys into his bedroom every night."

"Then there is no alternative. Richard of the Lion Heart will kindly show the way. He will be able to assist the ladies down when they stand upon the wall."

Loushkin placed himself in position, and Richard I climbed up his body, stepped upon the wall, and jumped into the grounds.

"Shall we go next?" asked Mary Queen of Scots.

"If you please, your Majesty," said Mme. Tussaud.

In a moment the royal lady was standing on the top of the wall.

"Jump!" cried Richard I, from within the grounds.

"Would we were there to catch thee!" shouted Henry VIII, as Mary disappeared.

"Now you, Julie," said Mme. Tussaud to Mme. Sainte Amaranthe.

Kissing her fingers to the company, the young beauty climbed vivaciously up to Loushkin's shoulders and sprang over the wall like a bird.

"The gentlemen will go next," said Mme. Tussaud, "and will settle the order of precedence among themselves."

Cromwell stepped forward, but was pushed aside by Richard III, who, with the scornful remark, "First the lords, then the commons," was soon over the garden wall, despite his infirmity. Charles II yielded precedence to Henry VIII, who, being fat and scant of breath, begged his assistance.



" 'Give me a leg up, Charles' "

"Give me a leg up, Charles," he said, "and be tender with me an thou lovest me."

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“ Yes, Charles,” said Mme. Tussaud, “ get down on thy knees and serve as a step for Henry—i’ faith, he is too heavily accoutred to climb up there alone! Dear me, how natural it is to drop into the quaint speech of these dear old celebrities!”

It was with difficulty that he reached Loushkin’s shoulders, but he laughed good-humoredly all the time, and laughed the more when, in taking the jump, he alighted atop of Richard III and sent him sprawling.

“ A murrain on thee!” growled Richard, rubbing his shins. “ Canst not see where thou art leaping?”

“ Murrain in thy throat, thou misshapen knave!” roared Henry. “ Keep a civil tongue in thy head, thou saucy king, and take a jest in good part when it is served on thee!”

Knowing he was not a favorite and would be outmatched if it came to blows, Richard deemed it prudent not to pursue the quarrel. Then Charles II, Cromwell, and Houqua joined the company in the grounds.

The Headsman came next, and after him Guy Fawkes, who had stood in the rear, biting his nails.

“Will your Majesty follow?” said Mme. Tussaud, with great deference.

“An it must be, it must,” replied Elizabeth, gathering up her skirts. “Tom of the Thumb, I will make a stepping-stone of thee.”

Tom looked rather serious at this, and whispered aside to Mme. Tussaud, “Pick up the pieces, and let the green grass wave over my grave.” Nevertheless he bent his back, murmuring quietly to himself, “This beats Sir Walter Raleigh”; and after repeated efforts Elizabeth reached the garden wall and with a great deal of fuss was lifted safely down. There remained now only Loushkin, Tom Thumb, Lucy, and Mme. Tussaud.

“I have been thinking,” said the old lady, “that it will never do to leave the post-office van in the lane. It would cause inquiries to be made, and we might be discovered.”

“There is an old stable belonging to papa a little way down,” said Lucy. “It is not used for anything, and is quite empty. We have a nicer stable inside our grounds.”

“That will do capitally; we will put the horses and van in there.”

“But there is no corn for them to eat.”

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“ I will give them a touch of my magic cane. Then they will not need any corn.”

Loushkin led the horses into the stable, Mme. Tussaud gave them the magic touch, and the door was secured. Then Loushkin lifted Tom Thumb, Mme. Tussaud, and Lucy over the wall, and climbed over it himself. The entire party was now within the grounds.

CHAPTER X

HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS

FROM where they stood they could see, through the trees and bushes, the outlines of the dwelling-house, about a hundred yards away. It was a large, odd-looking building, dating back to the seventeenth century, and, as additions had been made from time to time, a wing here and a wing there, without any regard to architectural design, it presented a very straggling appearance. There were banks and beds of flowers about, from which a pleasant perfume arose, and a number of trees; and in front of the porch was a nice patch of level grass, upon which was a lawn-tennis net. Richard III stumbled over the pegs, which set him growling and fuming, and most of the others to smiling.

“Everybody is asleep, I suppose,” said Mme. Tussaud, peering up at the windows;

and Lucy replied they were sure to be. "We must get in somehow. Where does Rowley sleep?"

"At the back of the house; and Flip sleeps in the room with him."

"Who is Flip?"

"The Odd Boy. He helps Rowley in the garden, and we call him the Odd Boy because he is the only one we keep."

"A very good reason. We will go to the back door, and you shall wake Rowley. We will keep out of sight until the door is opened. Then I will explain."

"And if Master Rowley be not satisfied with the explanation," said Richard III, "we will undertake to make him so."

"I will have no violence," said Mme. Tussaud; "I have given my promise."

"Promises are but words," said the scheming meddler.

"When a promise is made it must be kept, Richard," said Mme. Tussaud, "and I will take good care that my promises are kept."

"Bully for you, madame," said Tom Thumb; "The American Eagle waves its flag over you. The more I see of you, Richard Three, the

more I don't like you. You are not popular, king, with T. T., nor with the company generally, if I am a judge of human nature. Three cheers for Richmond! Oh, you may frown! I guess I can take the starch out of you. Do you know what sweet Will says of you?

'A bloody tyrant, and a homicide;
One raised in blood, and one in blood established.'

That 's your record, Richard Three, in black and white—a plagued sight of black, and not much white to speak of."

This defiant speech was spoken while they were walking to the back door, at which they now paused; and Lucy, advancing, rapped on it till she made herself heard within.

"Who be there?" a voice cried from the room. "If it be burglars, bide a bit till I get my gun."

"No, Rowley, no," Lucy cried softly; "don't get your gun. It is n't burglars. Open the door—quick!"

"La me!" the same voice exclaimed. "Be that you, little missy?"

"Yes, Rowley, yes. Do open the door!"

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“ Bide a bit, missy, till I get my candle. Flip, you raskel, git up, or I ’ll leather ye.” Those outside now saw through the window the glimmer of the candle Rowley had lighted. “ I sha’n’t be a minute, missy; but, ’eaven and earth, what be the matter? Be the house afire? ”

He opened the door and stood there, half dressed, shading the candle with his hand. The Odd Boy, in his bare feet, stood behind him. Lucy stepped into the room and kept her back to the door.

“ It be little missy, surely,” said Rowley, an old man with the gardener’s stoop in his bones, which were all curves. “ Well, well—a feather ’d upset me. Land o’ mercy, who be these? ” For the celebrities were now slowly filing in, one after another, and Rowley retreated to the extreme end of the room in a state of terror, while the Odd Boy bolted under the bed and howled.

“ They are my friends, Rowley,” said Lucy, speaking very rapidly. “ Please don’t cry out, or papa will be angry, and you will get me into trouble. You would n’t do that, would you, Rowley? ”

“N-n-noa, missy,” Rowley managed to answer, with chattering teeth.

“Flip, be quiet!” cried Lucy. “If you keep on whining, papa will give you notice, and then what will your mother do?”

“Be I asleep or awake?” exclaimed Rowley. “Come out o’ that, Flip, and give me a pinch. That ’ll do, ye young rapscallion! I be awake, surely.”

“Now, Rowley, be good—you ’ve always been good to me.”

“Thank ye, missy, but I be a kind o’ flabbergasted with all these grand folk at this time o’ the morning. Where ’d ye all come from, if I do not make too bold in asking?”

“From London, Rowley.”

“From Lunnon—all the way from Lunnon! No, I be n’t awake; I be asleep.”

“Let me explain,” said Mme. Tussaud, stepping forward. “Miss Lucy has given you a very good character—”

“Thank ye, missy, thank ye.”

“And looks upon you as her friend—”

“I be that surely. I ’d do anything in the world for missy; but doan’t her feyther know—”

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"Her father knows nothing," said Mme. Tussaud. "He 's an unreasonable, obstinate old gentleman—"

"Ay, ay; you 're not fur off there, my lady."

"And is bent upon making everybody miserable—"

Here Lucy broke in with her fresh, eager voice: "You know, of course, Rowley, that Lydia hates the monster—Mr. Lorimer Grimweed, I mean—"

"That be a fact—and so do I, missy."

"And so do we all," said Mme. Tussaud. "Do we not, celebrities?"

With the exception of Richard III, they cried as with one voice, "We do!"

"Good! but not so loud next time," warned the Little Old Woman in Black.

"And we all like Harry Bower, do we not, celebrities?"

"We do!"—this in a hoarse whisper.

"You doan't say, missy," said Rowley, "that all these grand folk be friends o' Mr. Bower's?"

"They are, Rowley—all of them."

Then, as though she were directing a band of musicians, Mme. Tussaud turned to the

celebrities and waved her cane, whereupon they said, as before, "We are!"

"Then plagued if they be n't friends o' mine, and there 's my fist on it."

He held out his horny hand, but the only one who showed a disposition to take it was Tom Thumb, who, jumping up and darting forward, said:

"For one and all, old man. Shake!"

"So, as we are determined," said Mme. Tussaud, "that Miss Lydia shall not be made miserable by that Grimweed man, we have come down to bring her papa to reason."

Rowley slowly shook his head. "It be more than any one can do, my lady. It 's impossible. Why, he knows what 's good for everybody better than anybody. Bring measter to reason! 'T ain't to be done. 'T ain't to be done."

"We shall see. We are not going to hurt Mr. Scarlett—we have too much respect for him. But we have *no* respect for the Grimweed man, and should not mind hurting *him* a little—only a little—just enough to make him understand. And so that Lydia and Lucy may be happy, we want you to help us."

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“You will, won’t you, Rowley?” said Lucy. “You would n’t break my heart—and Lydia’s!”

“Break your hearts, missy! Why, I be ready to lay down my life for ye.”

“Then you will do what we wish you to do?”

“Ay, that I will.”

“And what we tell you to do,” said Mme. Tussaud, “that you will faithfully do?”

“Ay, my lady,” said the devoted old man. “I ’ll stand by little missy and Miss Lyddy through thick and thin.”

“On thy knees and swear it!” roared Henry VIII, striding forward and clapping his hand on Rowley’s shoulder, who shook as though he had been seized by an ague.

“Yes, do, Rowley, for my sake,” pleaded Lucy, and whispered in the old fellow’s ear: “You must n’t mind the way they speak; it ’s the way they ’ve been brought up.”

Rowley dropped on his knees with a “Marcy! Marcy! What will be the end o’ me?”

“Dost thou swear to be faithful and true?” demanded Henry.

"Say, 'Yes, your Majesty,'" whispered Lucy.

"Yes, your Majesty," stammered the fear-stricken gardener.

"'T is well. Play us false and thy head shall grace the Tower gates. And thou, Flip of the Odd, down on thy marrow-bones and swear!"

Down flopped the Odd Boy by Rowley's side. Mme. Tussaud would have intervened, but Henry waved her aside, saying:

"We play not quite the part of mice, Mme. la Tussaud. Doth our royal dignity count for naught? Hath the varlet sworn, *ma belle*?"

"Yes, sire," Lucy replied. "I answer for them both."

"Thou art wise beyond thy years, sweetheart, and these faithful servitors shall be rewarded. Rise, Sir Rowley. We attach thee and Flip of the Odd to our royal person. Lead the way to the banqueting-hall and set before us thy choicest viands."

"My goodness gracious, Rowley," exclaimed Lucy, "King Henry has made you a knight!"

"What be that, missy?" asked Rowley,

rising from his knees. "Nothing bad, I hope. Doan't ye be telling me it 's something bad, doan't ye now!"

"No, it 's nothing bad. You are *Sir Rowley*. Oh, how funny! What *will* papa say? And where 's your sword and shield? *Sir Rowley*, if you please, we are all very hungry. Is there anything in the larder?"

"There be always something in the larder, missy," he answered, bewildered by the explanation; "but 't is more than I dare to do, to go there without Mrs. Peckham's leave, and there 's no getting her at this time o' night. She keeps her door locked, and sleeps like a top. She 's mighty particular about her kitchen, missy, as you know."

"Yes; but you 'll do what we want, Rowley, won't you?"

"Of course he will," said Mme. Tus-saud, answering for him. "Show the way, Lucy."

"I hope you won't mind eating your supper in the kitchen," said the little girl, turning to the celebrities. "The banqueting-hall—I mean the dining-room—is under papa's bedroom, and we might disturb him."

“Let us go, let us go,” said Henry. “We are famishing.”

Thither they proceeded, the Odd Boy going first with a candle; and after the gas was lighted the celebrities made themselves so much at home that Mrs. Peckham, the cook, would have gone into hysterics had she witnessed the scene. The kitchen was a picture of neatness. Everything was in apple-pie order. The floor was swept clean, the hearth brushed up, the tables and dressers sweet with the last vigorous scrub, the saucepans, the dish-covers, the frying and stewing pans, and every tin and copper utensil shone like silver and gold. Cups and saucers, plates, dishes, mugs, jugs, knives, forks, and spoons — there was not a single article where it ought not to have been. You might have eaten off the floor and been none the worse for it.

Three cats witnessed the entrance of the invaders, a black, a tortoise-shell, and a white Persian. For the last of these, cook made a bed every night in a basket lined with flannel. The two feline commoners purred when the gas was lighted, and made themselves quite friendly with the company, rubbing their

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heads against the royal visitors as though they had been on intimate terms for years. The fat and indolent Persian did not move from her warm couch, but merely blinked her eyes and gazed indifferently at the intruders through her half-closed lids.

Here occurred an exciting episode which set the party in commotion. The three lady celebrities began to scream loudly, and jumping on the kitchen table, pointed with terrified looks to a nimble little mouse trying its best to escape from the room. By the time the gentlemen had armed themselves with pokers, tongs, and shovels the creature had disappeared, and the ladies were prevailed upon to be seated; but as there were only two chairs in the kitchen the company was obliged to sit upon the table. This adventure happily ended, plates, dishes, knives and forks, and spoons and glasses were taken from the dresser-shelves and drawers, and then Lucy and Rowley and the Odd Boy and Mme. Tussaud, and of course Tom Thumb, ran in and out of the larder, fetching everything eatable that could be found, and laying it before the celebrities.

“ Oh, dear! oh, dear me!” thought Lucy;

“what *will* Peckham say when she comes down to cook the breakfast, and what *would* she say now if she peeped into the room? Oh, how she would stare!”

The sight would have made any one stare. It is not every day that Henry VIII can be seen sitting on a kitchen table between a fashionable French beauty and a Scottish queen, sharing a roast chicken with them, giving them the titbits, and, like a gallant monarch, eating the drumsticks himself; nor Queen Elizabeth with a dish of pigeon-pie on her lap, which she was enjoying greatly; nor Richards I and III and Charles II and Oliver Cromwell disposing of great slices of ham and beef; nor Guy Fawkes and a Russian giant, whose head touched the ceiling, reveling in the remains of a beefsteak-pudding! Houqua, with a pair of chop-sticks, which he took from the folds of his padded robe (where he seemed to keep a general store), was dexterously eating a dish of boiled rice like a conjuror. General Tom Thumb was engaged in cutting a piece from a big cherry-pie; and the executioner of the good old days was heartily munching bread and cheese, while

his eyes glared through his mask. No, indeed! Even in Guildhall such a sight could not be seen at the beginning of the twentieth century.

And how they all enjoyed it! And how graciously Queen Elizabeth bent over Tom Thumb as, upon one knee, he gallantly offered her a generous share of his cherry-pie. And what subdued laughter and clapping of hands at the discomfiture of Richard III and Guy Fawkes when they tried to filch choice morsels from their neighbors' plates! And how Henry called for more, and then for something to wash it down! There was a nine-gallon cask of cider in the larder, which was immediately laid under contribution; and everything was going on swimmingly, and every one was as jolly as jolly could be, when all at once Lucy held up her hand and cried:

"Hush!"

They all stopped and listened. The sound of soft footsteps fell upon their ears.

Somebody was coming down-stairs!

CHAPTER XI

MISS PENNYBACK RECEIVES A SHOCK

EACH pair of eyes was turned in the direction whence the approaching footsteps came. The kitchen door was then slowly, slowly opened, and a tall, lank, beruffled figure in white appeared.

It was Lucy's governess, Miss Lucinda Pennyback, who had been aroused from sleep by sounds for which she could not account. She was by no means sure whether they proceeded from within the house or from outside the high wall which surrounded Marybud Lodge.

When the sounds, first fell upon her ears she sat bolt upright in bed and listened—and was still in doubt. It was most tantalizing to a lady of a timid and inquisitive turn of mind; and at length, unable any longer to restrain her curiosity, she got out of bed and lighted a candle. The light gave her courage, and



“The kitchen door was then slowly,
slowly opened”



she determined to go down and see. So downstairs she crept, very slowly and cautiously, shading the candle with her hand. She paused a moment outside Mr. Scarlett's bedroom. Her employer was sleeping like a top or he would not have snored so loudly. She listened at the door of Lydia's bedroom, but that sweet girl's soft breathing would scarcely have stirred a rose-leaf. The sounds, therefore, which Miss Pennyback heard had not disturbed those members of the family. If she had not been afflicted with a prying disposition of the first order, and if she had not harbored a suspicion that cook was entertaining visitors on the sly, she would have returned to her bed; but she was determined to get at the root of the mystery, and continued to proceed warily in the direction of the kitchen. Miss Pennyback did not like cook—she did not like many people, being a very prim, precise, and particular lady. Her age was—well, not under forty. She had a long, thin face, and a long, thin body, and she never went to bed without putting her hair in curl-papers.

And, as has been stated, she slowly, slowly opened the kitchen door and saw—

Seventeen human, motionless heads turned toward her.

Seventeen pairs of eyes fixed upon her face.
Appalling sight!

Lucy was the first to show any sign of life. She advanced to her schoolmistress, and, holding out her hands, cried:

“Miss Pennyback! Dear Miss Pennyback!”

But her words were
lost upon the lady she
addressed. Miss Penny-
back cast one anguished,
terrified glance upon the
strange figures which
met her eyes, threw up
her arms, uttered a pier-
cing shriek, and fell faint-
ing to the floor.

*All this
happened
in
the
space
of
six
seconds.*

CHAPTER XII

FLIP OF THE ODD DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF

“OH, dear! oh, dear!” cried Lucy, wringing her hands. “What is to be done now?”

Richard III appeared to have anticipated the question, and showed himself ready to answer it before it was asked. The moment Miss Pennyback fell to the floor he dragged the Headsman forward and, pointing to the unconscious lady, hissed fiercely in his ear:

“She lieth in a splendid position. This is your opportunity. Off with her head!”

Then Mme. Tussaud darted forth, and, extending her magic cane, cried in a stern voice:

“Dare but to raise your ax and you are doomed! And you also, Richard. Have you not committed murders enough, that you should thirst for more? Back, back to your corner at once, you bloodthirsty king! Back, I say!”

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In sullen silence Richard III and the Headsman slowly retreated to the extreme end of the kitchen, as they had been commanded to do.

"Foiled again, Richard Three," Tom Thumb called out. "You 're not to be trusted for one solitary minute, and I reckon you 'll be tarred and feathered before you 'reach the end of your rope. If you had been raised in my country, a free and enlightened republic would have bound up your wounds for you in a way that would have considerably astonished you—yes, *sir!*"

"So this is your governess, my dear," said Mme. Tussaud to Lucy.

"Yes, ma'am. And she is *so* fond of telling tales!"

"We will give her something to worry over," said Mme. Tussaud, laughing, as she touched Miss Pennyback with her magic cane.

"When she wakes it will puzzle her to find out whether she has been dreaming or not. You must show us her bedroom, and we will put her to bed again. Richard III, kindly lend me your cloak for a few minutes, and Mme. Sainte Amaranthe, may I trouble you for your assistance? There, wrap the

mantle carefully around her. Now, Loushkin, you are tall and strong; you can easily carry her up for us. A giant is a very useful person now and then! Pick up the candlestick, Lucy, and show us the way."

The Russian giant carefully lifted Miss Pennyback, and, preceded by Mme. Tussaud, Mme. Sainte Amaranthe, and Lucy, conveyed the unconscious governess to her sleeping-apartment and laid her upon the bed. Then Mme. Tussaud handed Richard's cloak to Loushkin, who returned to his comrades in the kitchen, groping his way along the corridor and stepping very softly. Meanwhile the two ladies removed Miss Pennyback's dressing-gown, which she had donned before she went down to the kitchen, put her to bed, and tucked her in nicely. That done, Mme. Tussaud looked about the room to see that no clue was left; and observing the match which Miss Pennyback had used to light her candle, she took it away with her—whereby she proved herself to be more than ever a woman of wisdom, because that burnt match was really an important piece of evidence. Then she blew out the candle and, with her

two companions, hastened back to the kitchen, where they found the company in a state of the highest hilarity, of which Flip of the Odd was the cause.

This lad, who had not a regular feature in his face, whose eyes were ill matched, whose mouth was all on one side, and whose features wore a perpetual grin, possessed remarkable gifts, with the display of which he had been entertaining the celebrities. They had arranged themselves in tiers, as though they were in a theater, some sitting on chairs on the floor, some upon the table, and some on chairs which had been lifted upon the table. There was thus a clear space all round the room between the dressers and the movable furniture, and it was in this space that Flip of the Odd was performing. He turned cart-wheels so rapidly and untiringly that it made one dizzy to look at the whirling figure; he put his arms under his legs and hopped about like a frog; he walked on his hands, and carried plates and dishes on the soles of his shoes. There was no end to his antics, and he had made himself so popular that Henry VIII was declaring that he would double the boy's

wages, when Mme. Tussaud, Lucy, and Mme. Sainte Amaranthe returned.

“Less noise, less noise!” said Mme. Tussaud, reversing Flip of the Odd so that he stood as nature intended him to stand. “Stop this clamor, or you will alarm the family. Get down from the table, all of you, and help me to clear the things away. The kitchen must be left as clean and tidy as we found it. Come, bustle, bustle, bustle, every man Jack of you!”

Not only did every man Jack (with the exception of two), but every woman Jill of them began instantly to bustle about and wash up the plates and dishes, and none entered into the spirit of the affair with greater zest than Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth.

“Doth not this remind thee, Bess,” he asked, “of the pranks of childhood? Dost recall the night when we discovered thee in the pantry, licking thy little fingers, which thou hadst plunged into a dish of conserve? ’T was barberry, thy favorite jam, and thy face and hands were black with the sweet juice. Thou hadst a cold afterward, and wert dosed. Ho, ho, ho! Mme. la Tussaud, hast thou a con-

serve of barberry for our royal daughter? We will share it with her."

"We heard a story," said Queen Elizabeth, pointing her finger at him, "of our royal father being caught at midnight in the pantry with a jar of piccalilli in his lap, which he had almost emptied."

"Ho, ho, ho!" shouted Henry, roaring with laughter. "Did that story get to thine ears, Bess? Piccalilli was a pickle we never could resist. The recollection makes our mouth water. We were little higher than Tom of the Thumb at the time, and had we not been sick for a week afterward we were in danger of a whipping. Ah, those were days! Lucy, ma belle, thou must set before us a jar of piccalilli. By my fay, we are a boy again!"

And indeed he behaved like one, and laughed so heartily and made such merry jests that he infected the whole company with his jollity (always with two exceptions). Mme. Tussaud was quite right when she told Lucy that she would find him very entertaining. He tickled Oliver Cromwell in the ribs, and Oliver, laying aside his puritanical airs for a moment, gave bluff King Hal a poke in the



“ ‘ We heard a story,’ said Queen Elizabeth, pointing her finger at him, ‘ of our royal father being caught at midnight in the pantry with a jar of piccalilli in his lap, which he had almost emptied’ ”



side, almost doubling him up, while Charles II and Richard I had a fencing bout with Mrs. Peckham's wooden rolling-pins which evoked much applause and laughter. And when Richard III—who, advancing to see the combat, was pushed by Tom Thumb between the combatants—received a smart crack on the head from each of them, the hilarity threatened to become uncontrollable. Houqua did not laugh loudly, but emitted a succession of grave chuckles and wagged his head from side to side.

Mme. Tussaud restored order by exclaiming:

“Come, come, you are leaving the work half undone. We shall have plenty of time for fun by and by.”

The rivalry now was who should do the greatest amount of useful work in the shortest time. If Henry VIII behaved like a boy, Queen Elizabeth behaved like a romping school-girl. She drew quarts of hot water from the boiler, and helped to wash the plates and dishes, which Oliver Cromwell, Guy Fawkes, and the royal princes wiped dry with the dish-cloths with which Tom Thumb provided them. No

one was busier than he, and no one more willing. Everybody kept calling to the merry little man for this, that, or t' other, and he never failed to produce what they required, or to do what was asked of him. Every time Sir Rowley left the kitchen with his hands full, or returned with his hands empty, he had some such remark to make as: "Wot larks! Go it—*go* it—go it! Oh, be n't it jolly!"

And while all this was going on, Richard III, with folded arms, gazed moodily before him, or unfolded them to rub his head; and the Headsman lurked in his corner, waiting for orders.

When the work was finished the kitchen was once more a picture of neatness. There was not a plate or jug out of its proper place; the black cat and the tortoise-shell were stretched before the range, which still threw out a little heat, and the fat Persian was asleep in its basket, this laziest of lazy creatures not having taken the slightest interest in the proceedings.

CHAPTER XIII

AFTER A STORM COMES A CALM

“WHAT has now to be seen to,” said Mme. Tussaud to Lucy, “is how to dispose of ourselves for the rest of the night. My celebrities are getting sleepy. Where can we repose out of sight of your papa and the governess and servants? Has the house any spare rooms?”

“Oh, yes, a great many,” replied Lucy. “Before papa took the Lodge it was a boarding-school for boys. There are rooms where the boys used to sleep; but there is nothing in them,—not a bed or a chair; they are quite empty.”

“H’m! My celebrities can’t very well sleep on the floor; it would spoil their clothes, which cost enough money already; besides, some of them are in armor. Look at Henry VIII, for instance; if he got down he might be unable to get up again. I am proud of Henry. He is

rather fat, it is true; but no one would doubt that he was a king—”

“Ay,” murmured Queen Elizabeth, drowsily; she had caught the words, and was thinking of her favorite poet; “‘every inch a king.’”

“He is a most magnificent figure,” continued Mme. Tussaud, “but I doubt whether he is appreciated as much as he deserves to be. The collar of the Garter he is wearing is the same he wore when he met the French king, Francis I, on the Field of the Cloth of Gold. But I am wandering from the point. We can do without beds, for on no account would I allow my celebrities to remove their costumes; but they must have something to sit upon. Marybud Lodge having being an educational establishment, there should be a school-room in it.”

“There are two,” said Lucy, “with benches and desks at which the boys did their lessons.”

“The very thing,” said Mme. Tussaud. “One will do for the gentlemen, the other for the ladies.” She rapped on the table to arouse the attention of the celebrities. “You will all follow me without making the least

noise; our work is done for the night, and we are going to rest. Sir Rowley and Flip of the Odd will put out the gas when we are gone, and get to bed. I shall want to see them both early in the morning."

" ' And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow,' " interrupted Queen Elizabeth.

" Well, not quite so early as that," said Mme. Tussaud, smiling. " Be up at your usual hour, Rowley and Flip, and be careful that you do not whisper to a soul a word of what you have seen to-night."

" Ye have sworn, varlets," said Henry VIII. " Break your oath and it will fare ill with ye."

" You won't say a word, will you, Rowley? " said Lucy.

" I be mum as a porkeypine, missy," replied the old man. " They sha'n't drag a word out o' me, and I 'll not let Flip out o' my sight."

" We rely on you," said Mme. Tussaud. " Good night."

Sir Rowley and Flip of the Odd bowed low as the celebrities followed Mme. Tussaud and Lucy out of the kitchen; and then Sir Rowley put out the gas and went to his bedroom,

wondering what the morrow would bring forth: what old Mr. Scarlett would say when he saw all these great people; what Miss Lydia would say; what Mrs. Peckham would say when she found the larder empty; what Mr. Grimweed would say when he came to the Lodge; what the tradesmen would say—what everybody would say!

“Lardy, lardy!” he said as he reached his room. “This do be a night surely. Kings and queens and giants and dwarfs a-coming to Barnet in the dead o’ night, and measter to be brought to reason, and me being made Sir Rowley by a king in armor—my old head spins to think of it all! Flip, when ye ’re a grandfeyther ye ’ll have a tale to tell.”

But Flip had tumbled into his bed with his clothes on and was fast asleep; and Sir Rowley was not long in following his example.

When Mme. Tussaud saw the two bedrooms she said they would do capitally, and she made a little speech to her celebrities, in which she explained the arrangements for their night’s repose. She said that when the ladies had retired, a watch would have to be

kept by the gentlemen of the company, to guard against alarms and surprises.

"We thank thee for thy care of us," said Queen Elizabeth. "It is time indeed to retire, for the 'iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve.'"

Mme. Tussaud continued her address to the general company, and asked who would volunteer for the first watch. Tom Thumb, ever ready, instantly stepped forward, and he was followed by most of the others, who declared they were ready to die in defense of the ladies.

"I do not doubt your courage," said Mme. Tussaud. "You are on parole, remember. Who plays false with his knightly word forfeits his knightly honor, and I shall deal severely with him. Richard III, what are you muttering in the ear of my Headsman?"

"Nothing that it behooves me to tell you, madame," answered the surly king.

"If you 'll excuse me for contradicting you, Richard Three," said Tom Thumb, "that 's an everlasting whopper. Your last words to the gentleman in the black mask were: 'We will despatch them in their sleep, or when their backs are turned.'"

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“Foul befall thy o’er-glib tongue!” growled Richard III. “I have a mind to trounce thee. If I had thee alone—ha! thou malapert knave! Aïe!—our favorite corn!”

Tom Thumb had, “accidentally on purpose,” as he said, stepped upon the kingly toes, and the wily Richard was screaming with pain.

“Thou art rightly served,” said Richard Cœur de Lion. “With our own ears did we hear thee conspire. I would have thee be not so rude in speech to this gallant knight.”

He made a courtly gesture to Tom Thumb, who bowed his best bow.

“Knight!” sneered Richard III, hopping about on one leg. “A manikin such as he a knight! Thou art jesting.”

“I speak not in jest,” said the First Richard. “He is, I say, a gallant knight. Are not his deeds recorded in King Arthur’s court?”

‘Now he with tilts and tournaments
Was entertained so,
That all the best of Arthur’s knights
Did him much pleasure show.
Such were his deeds and noble acts,
In Arthur’s court there shone,
As like in all the world beside
Was hardly seen or known.’

They would hardly speak so of thee, name-sake."

"Great snakes!" cried Tom Thumb, enthusiastically. "Is all that about me? Give us some more, Richard of the Lion Heart."

"We know the poem by heart," answered Richard Cœur de Lion, "but it hath escaped our memory. We hold thee in our English hearts, Tom of the Thumb, as a very hero of romance."

"I' faith! gadzooks! by our lady! beshrew me! and marry come up!" cried Tom, plunging wildly into the vernacular of the middle ages. "Every boy who speaks the English language holds *thee*, noble Richard, as his hero of romance. I am a knave else." And he whispered to himself: "Bully for you, old man! Never thought it was in you. Pity that Barnum is n't alive to hear you."

"I will dispense with your services, Richard III," said Mme. Tussaud. "As for you" (to the Headsman, who, at a touch of the magic cane, became stiff and motionless), "I will lock you up in a closet for the rest of the night. Is this a cupboard here, Lucy? Yes, this will do."

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At a signal from her, Loushkin lifted the senseless form of the Headsman and deposited it in a dark closet originally used for disobedient pupils. She locked the door upon her prisoner, and, pocketing the key, desired the ladies to wish the gentlemen good night. This was done with much ceremony, and Mme. Tussaud, accompanied by Lucy, conducted Queen Elizabeth, Mary Queen of Scots, and Mme. Sainte Amaranthe to their chamber, and expressed the hope that they would sleep well.

“I shall not close my eyes,” she said to Lucy, when the door was shut upon the ladies. “My business is to keep a guard over my people. What I have done to the Headsman will have a salutary effect upon them, and I have no fear that Richard will succeed in inciting them to rebellion. They detest him, and he detests them, and detests our dear Tom Thumb most of all. What a plucky little mite he is! And now, child, my labors for the night are nearly over. All that remains to be done is to bring Miss Pennyback to her senses.”

“Before you do that,” said Lucy, “please tell me what *I* am to do.”

"Where do you sleep, my dear?"

"In the room next to Lydia's. I have to go through her room to get into mine."

"Can you creep in without waking her?"

"I think I can."

"Try. You can tell her everything in the morning before she comes down. It might frighten her to wake her up now, and I should not wish to disturb your papa at such an hour."

"Please," said Lucy, tearfully, "I *do* want to say something to you about papa."

"Well, child, say it."

"He is not unkind to us," said Lucy, "indeed, indeed, he is not. He has always been very good to us. But he is *so* fond of Marybud Lodge, and he would be miserable and wretched if we were turned out of it. I told you, didn't I, that it belongs to Mr. Grimweed? And he won't sell it to papa, and he won't renew the lease, unless Lydia promises to marry him. There is a tower on the top of the Lodge, you know, where papa studies the stars, and he says there is n't another house in England where he can do it so well. Papa is writing a book about the stars,—he has been writing

it all his life,—and he says it will take years and years to finish, and he can't finish it anywhere else. He has a large telescope fixed up there in the observatory, and he tells us such wonderful things about Jupiter and Mars and Venus and Saturn, and that other one—oh, yes, Uranus. I don't understand them a bit, but papa does love them all so much. And Mr. Grimweed says that papa's telescope belongs to him, because the stand is fixed to the floor. Lydia says that Mr. Grimweed *hates* dear Harry, and would like to crush him—yes, to crush him! Did you ever hear anything so dreadful? Oh, he *is* wicked, almost as wicked, it seems to me, as—as Richard III.”

Lucy made this long explanation with sobs and tears.

“ You don't want me to lay the blame on papa? ” said Mme. Tussaud, her kind hand patting Lucy's shoulder.

“ No, ma'am—please, please don't.”

“ But, after all, my dear little Lucy, it is papa and no one else who can say to the Grimweed man: ‘ Be off with you, monster; you shall *not* marry my daughter ’; and to Harry

Bower: 'Harry, you're a fine fellow. Lydia is yours. Take her, with my blessing, and be married to-morrow.' Now there is no one but your papa who can bring this happiness to Lydia."

"Of course not, ma'am. I know that."

"Then it is absolutely necessary that your papa shall be brought to reason, as well as that Grimweed man."

"Yes, ma'am; but you'll—you'll do it nicely, won't you?"

"With your papa? Certainly. But I will not promise to do it so nicely with the Grimweed man. Leave them both to me, child, and be quite easy in your mind about your papa. I will not hurt his little finger."

"Thank you—oh, thank you! You are the kindest lady that ever lived," said Lucy, wiping the tears from her eyes.

"Do not cry, my dear," said Mme. Tussaud. "Go to sleep with a light heart. I declare there is the dawn peeping at you, wondering why you are not in bed. Do you hear the birds? What shocking hours for you to keep—for us all, to be sure!"

She kissed Lucy very affectionately, and

when the child was in her bedroom, which she reached without disturbing Lydia, the old lady went to Miss Pennyback's apartment, and touching her with the magic cane, stole noiselessly away to look after her celebrities. The moment she stepped into the passage, Tom Thumb called out:

“Stand, ho! Who goes there?”

He spoke in so loud a tone that through the fast-closed doors of the ladies' sleeping-apartment the words reached the slumbering senses of Queen Elizabeth, who murmured drowsily:

“‘Friends to this ground, and liegemen to the Dane.’”

“It is only I, Tom,” said Mme. Tussaud. “How are you getting on?”

“‘I humbly thank you, well,’” replied Tom, who was in the Shaksperian vein.

Mme. Tussaud nodded smilingly at him, and, seating herself at the end of the passage, also kept watch to guard against surprises.

CHAPTER XIV

MISS PENNYBACK IS PERPLEXED

MISS PENNYBACK'S sensations may be imagined when, opening her eyes the moment Mme. Tussaud disappeared, she found herself in bed in her own room.

"Gracious powers!" she murmured. "Where am I? How came I here?"

She sat up in bed and put her hand to her forehead.

"I fainted away in the kitchen," she mused. "I went down-stairs to ascertain the cause of a midnight disturbance in the house, and I lost my senses at the extraordinary scene that presented itself. I must have fallen to the ground—I must have dropped the candlestick; and now here am I in my own apartment, without the least idea how I got here. How *did* I get here? Is it within the bounds of possibility that I walked up-stairs in an unconscious state and got into bed without

knowing it? No, it is not possible. But if it is not possible, how, I repeat, did I get here? I put my slippers on. I distinctly remember putting on my slippers and dressing-gown. How is it that they are off? Lucinda Pennyback, are you going mad?"

She was so terrified at the idea that she jumped out of bed and drew up the blind. The first blush of dawn was in the sky; the birds were twittering in the trees; within the house an eery silence prevailed.

Bewildered, she looked around the room. Everything was in order: the candle was in the candlestick—the candlestick which she recollected, or fancied she recollected, carrying down in her hand, with a lighted candle in it. She had struck a match to light it; she looked for the burnt match, and could not find it; and yet she recollected, or fancied she recollected, that she had put it in the match-tray. Her dressing-gown and slippers were on the seat of the chair.

More and more bewildered, Miss Pennyback opened the door, and creeping into the passage, leaned her head over the balustrade and listened. She heard not a sound; every



“ ‘Where am I? How came I here?’ ”



one in the house, apparently, was asleep. She reëntered her room, closed the door, drew down the blind, and got into bed again.

“Let me recall the circumstances,” she mused, her head now on her pillow. “Let me marshal my confused thoughts. I wake up in the middle of the night and fancy I hear voices in the vicinity of the kitchen. I get up, put on my slippers, light the candle, and steal down-stairs in my dressing-gown. I reach the kitchen stairs, and hear the sounds of revelry, which seem suddenly to stop at my approach. I open the door. The gas is lighted, and the room is full of strange company. In the momentary glance I cast around, I fancy I see kings in armor and queens in their royal robes. There is a man whose head almost touches the ceiling; there is a very small man; there is a Chinaman with a pigtail; there is a dreadful person in a black mask, carrying an ax—he looks like an executioner of olden times. All their heads are turned toward me—all their eyes are fixed upon my face. I hear Lucy’s voice calling, ‘Miss Pennyback! Dear Miss Pennyback!’ Terrified out of my senses, I swoon away—

and I know nothing more till I find myself in my own bed, with no signs around me that I had moved from it since I retired to rest after eating my supper. Compose yourself, Lucinda. There is but one solution of this strange, this singular mystery. You dreamed these things—you are under the spell of an extraordinary delusion. You must preserve the secret; you must not mention it to a soul, or it will be supposed you are going mad. I hope, Lucinda Pennyback, you are *not* going mad. It was all a delusion—yes, a delusion. And yet, and yet—”

The perplexed lady could get no further. She tossed about in bed some time, but, being tired and exhausted, at length fell asleep again, and had the most frightful dreams.

CHAPTER XV

WONDERS WILL NEVER CEASE

IT would be difficult to say which of the two was the more astonished—Miss Pennyback when she found herself in bed after fainting away in the kitchen, or Mrs. Peckham, the cook, when she discovered the state of affairs in the special region over which she reigned. Pigeon-pie, beefsteak-pudding, ham and beef, roast chickens, cherry-tart, jellies, all gone; the nine-gallon cask of cider quite empty! What made the mystery still more mysterious was the absence of any signs of disorder.

She sank down in a chair and gasped, and for a few moments her mind was like a clock which had suddenly stopped. When it was set going again, only one word escaped her lips:

“Burglars!”

She followed this up by coming to the conclusion that the whole family and every one of the servants, with the exception of herself, had been murdered, and now lay weltering in their gore; and she was undecided whether to pierce the air with a succession of screams or to run for the police. Before she had made up her mind, Belinda, eighteen years of age, scullery and kitchen maid, walked into the kitchen, rubbing the sleep out of her eyes with her knuckles. Molly the parlor-maid, Maria the housemaid, and Belinda slept together; Mrs. Peckham, as a superior person, had a sleeping-apartment to herself.

"Alive, Belinda?" gasped Mrs. Peckham.

"Yes, mum," answered Belinda, in the calmest of voices.

"Oh, Belinda!" groaned Mrs. Peckham.

"Yes, mum. Wot 's the matter, mum? 'Ave yer 'ad a fit? Shall I rub yer 'ands?"

"Belinda," said Mrs. Peckham, in a sepulchral tone, suddenly clutching the maid's arm, "how did you escape?"

Belinda was a young person who was never astonished. If you had fired a gun within a yard of her, she would not have been startled.

So deeply steeped in sensationalism was she that had she met Gog and Magog in a country lane, she would have said, "'Ow d' yer do?" She was a passionate lover of romance, and the most blood-curdling and extravagant episodes in the most blood-curdling and extravagant stories that ever were written were accepted by her as perfectly reasonable and natural. Nothing frightened or startled her; she would have welcomed an earthquake and have looked down into the depths of the earth for familiar faces; and when ghosts were spoken of, her one wish was to meet and shake hands with them.

"How did you escape, Belinda?" repeated Mrs. Peckham.

"How did I escape? From wot, mum?"

"From being murdered in your bed?"

Belinda's imagination began to work.

"It wos orfle, mum, orfle!"

"Yes—go on—tell me the worst."

Belinda desired nothing better. Her imagination became very active indeed.

"It wos in the middle of the night, mum—"

"Yes—yes?"

"In the *dead* middle of the night, w'en I

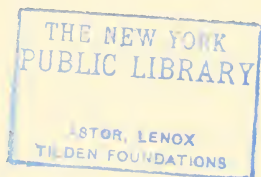
'eerd 'em comin' up the stairs. 'Belinda,' sez I to myself, with my 'ead under the bed-clothes so as they should n't 'ear me, 'Belinda,' sez I, 'look out. The blood-sprinkled ruffyungs is a-thustin' for yer blood.' With that, I crep' out o' bed, and ketched 'old of a rope. While I was a-doin' of it, I 'eerd 'em outside comin' closer, and closer, and closer, and my 'eart ceased to beat. I felt as if buckets o' cold water was runnin' down my back. Oh, mum, their footsteps sounded like the pant'ers in a Hindyen jingle! Afore they could spring on me, I throwed the rope out o' the winder, and 'eld on to it like grim death. 'Belinda,' sez I to myself between my clenched teeth, 'it 's now or never. Yer life 'angs upon a thread.' Hinch by hinch I clum' down. That 's 'ow I escaped, mum."

"Oh, Belinda, did you hear Molly and Maria scream?"

"Scream, mum! They curdled my marrer. The minute I 'eerd 'em I said to myself, 'Belinda, save 'em!' Wot did I do but clum' up the rope ag'in, but alas! it was not to be. The rope broke in the middle afore I was 'arf-way up, and there I was, transfixed in the hair."



“Scream, mum! They curdled my marrer”



“ Dreadful, dreadful! ” groaned Mrs. Peckham. “ Those poor, poor girls! What ’s to be done, Belinda? What ’s to be— ”

But she broke off here, and stared wildly at Mme. Tussaud, who at that moment entered the kitchen, and smiled at her and Belinda.

“ Good morning,” said the old lady, pleasantly.

“ Good mornin’, mum,” said Belinda, perfectly composed.

Mrs. Peckham said nothing; she collapsed in her chair.

“ Why don’t you light the fire? ” said Mme. Tussaud. “ We shall all be wanting breakfast presently I hope you will be able to give us something nice, for my people have moved in the very highest society, and they know how to appreciate good cooking. Come in, Henry; come in, Elizabeth.”

Belinda, who was on her knees at the grate, turned her head and nodded genially at King Henry and Queen Elizabeth. It being her nature to accept everything, she accepted this. Mrs. Peckham threw her apron over her head and moaned.

“ My dear woman,” said Mme. Tussaud,

removing the apron gently from the terrified woman's face, "what are you moaning for? We are friends of the family. You are Mrs. Peckham, I believe?"

"Y-y-yes, ma'am," answered Mrs. Peckham, with chattering teeth.

"One of the best cooks in the country, I've been told, and one of the most obliging. But I must introduce myself and my friends. I am Mme. Tussaud, and this is his Majesty King Henry VIII, known as 'bluff King Hal,' and this is her gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth—'good Queen Bess,' you know."

Belinda whipped round on her knees, and, holding up her hands palm to palm, gazed adoringly at the royal personages. The young scullery-maid had paid one visit to the famous exhibition, and that the figures there should come to life and be able to roam the country was quite in accordance with her romantic notions. When Mme. Tussaud affably introduced herself by name to Mrs. Peckham, cook plucked up courage to raise her eyes; and her astonishment increased while her terror diminished—her feelings thereby undergoing an agreeable change.

She had visited the exhibition more than once, and had seen the royal personages who now stood before her. Of course it was all very wonderful, but there they were, and she had no doubt whatever that she was wide awake. She was a loyal subject, and as she could not possibly sit in the presence of royalty, she rose to her feet; and if her limbs still trembled, it was only natural.

“We came home with our dear Lucy rather late last night,” continued Mme. Tus-saud, “and we were all ravenously hungry; so what did we do but ransack your larder and make free with what we found there. We owe you a thousand apologies, for we made sad havoc, I fear; but we washed up after we had done, and put everything back in its proper place. Lucy showed us how to do it all.”

“Bless Miss Lucy’s heart!” said Mrs. Peckham, beginning to be won over by the kind voice and benevolent face. “She does what she likes with me, and she’s welcome. Did she eat any of the cherry-pie I made for her?”

“Yes, she had two helpings,” answered

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Mme. Tussaud. "Miss Lucy's a great favorite of yours, I see."

"She is everybody's favorite. There's nothing in the world I would n't do for her."

"She spoke so nicely of you, and she is hoping, as we all are, that she can count on your assistance in what we have come here to do."

"Nothing wrong, I hope, ma'am?"

"If it were wrong, would Lucy have anything to do with it? No, it is something good. The fact is—but can you keep a secret?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Mrs. Peckham, eagerly. "Try me."

"I will," said Mme. Tussaud. "The fact is, we are going to do our best to get rid of that dreadful creature, Lorimer Grimweed."

"And a good riddance to bad rubbish!" exclaimed Mrs. Peckham. "That's what I say, though it was my last word. I call it a downright shame to make Miss Lydia marry such a man!"

"It is breaking Lucy's heart as well as Lydia's. But she shall not be made to marry him. That is what we have to prevent, and that is what we want your help for, dear Mrs. Peckham."

“ But what have you done to Molly and Maria? ” said Mrs. Peckham, clasping her hands.

“ You foolish creature, explain yourself.”

“ Are they alive—that ’s what I want to know. Oh, ma’am, are they alive? ”

“ I see,” said Mme. Tussaud, smiling. “ You believe we have been murdering people in their beds. That ’s a nice opinion to have of Lucy’s friends! My dear woman, everybody here is alive—very much alive. Nobody’s little finger is hurt.”

“ Look here,” cried Mrs. Peckham, seizing Belinda, “ what do you mean, you little storyteller, by telling me you heard Molly and Maria scream in such a manner as to curdle your marrow? ”

“ Oh, leave me alone, do!” replied Belinda. “ It wos you as begun it. Did n’t yer arsk me if I wos murdered in my sleep? If I *wos* murdered, ’ow could I answer yer? ”

“ There has been a little misunderstanding, I see,” said Mme. Tussaud, “ which you can settle by and by. My dear woman, what are you staring at me in that way for? ”

“ It comes into my mind, ma’am,” said Mrs.

Peckham, speaking very slowly, "that if you was Mme. Tussaud you ought to be wax."

"Do you hear that, Harry?" exclaimed Mme. Tussaud, merrily, and she and her two celebrities burst out laughing. "Wax! Shake hands, Mrs. Peckham—don't be afraid. There—does my hand feel like wax? If we were wax, could we laugh, and talk, and eat? You should have seen us last night doing justice to the good things you provided for us; it would have done your heart good. We resemble wax in one respect, though. We stick to our friends."

"That 's a good one, Mme. la Tussaud," said Henry VIII. "We stick to our friends! Ho, ho, ho! Tom of the Thumb will appreciate that. Our court jester could n't beat it. Ay, Mistress Peckham, we stick to our friends; and we will stick to our friends ma belle Lucie and fair Lydia—whose winsome face we have not yet beheld—till they are made happy. On my kingly word, we will!"

"I am glad you enjoyed your supper," said Mrs. Peckham, in a faltering voice.

"Their Majesties enjoyed it immensely. Did you not, Henry and Elizabeth?"

"The cooking was indifferent good," said Queen Elizabeth.

"Nay, Bess, it was perfection," said Henry VIII, who had been advised by Mme. Tussaud to win Mrs. Peckham's good graces. "We remember eating once a foreign delicacy termed a karum pie which we did not enjoy more than we did the cooking in Marybud Lodge." Mrs. Peckham curtsied; and Belinda, not to be behindhand, made a most elaborate sweep of her body. "We are looking forward to delicacies at thy hand, Mistress Peckham. See that thou disappoint us not."

"What would your Majesties like for breakfast?" asked Mrs. Peckham.

"Ah, that is a sensible question. It likes us much. There cometh to our memory a banquet we gave which, if thou canst emulate, thou shalt name thine own reward."

"Will your Majesty be good enough to give me the names of the courses?—and I will see what I can do."

"There are memories that never fade," said Henry VIII, pensively. "The names of the principal dishes are in our mind, and though many a year has passed over our head, their

delicious perfume is still in our nostrils. There were capons of high gravy, saddles of venison, calvered salmon, custards planted with garters, godwits, peafowl, pickled mullets,—ha, ha! those pickled mullets!—porpoise in armor, Georges on horseback, halibut engrailed, herons, cygnets, perch in foyle, venison pasties, hippocras jelly, and mainemy royal. By my fay, that was a feast! A train of pages, the fairest in the land, dressed in fantastic habits of green and pink, waited upon us. There was one bright wench whose sparkling eyes—”

“Sir!” cried Elizabeth, warningly.

“’T is but a memory, Bess,” said Henry, with a laugh that was half a sigh. “Canst compass such a feast as that, Mistress Peckham?”

The bewildered woman, whose eyes had grown larger and larger as the dishes were enumerated, mournfully shook her head.

“I don’t think it can be managed in this house, your royal Majesty,” she replied. “There ’s a ’am in soak, but it won’t be ready till evening. Capons, and custards, and jellies, perhaps—”

“Don’t let it worry you, good Mrs. Peck-



Lydia

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ham," said Mme. Tussaud. "His Majesty speaks of olden times, and I will wager my whole exhibition that modern cooking beats the ancient. It stands to reason, with such a nice range as you have there. Give us some bacon and eggs, some buttered toast, and a few pots of jam, and we shall manage very well."

Henry VIII smiled with delight. "Bacon and eggs! Buttered toast! Pots of jam! It sounds bravely, Mme. la Tussaud."

"I could do your Majesty an omelet," said Mrs. Peckham, taking heart.

"In the French style, mistress?"

"Yes, your royal Majesty."

"'T is well. Do thy best, and we will not forget thee. Henry knows how to reward good service."

"Reward her now, Henry," said Mme. Tussaud. "You were ever generous."

"So be it," said Henry. "What wilt thou have, mistress? A title—lands—money?" Mrs. Peckham's breath was almost taken away at these words. "Nay, thou shalt have them all. We create thee Marchioness of Bar-net, and do bestow upon thee a thousand

marks a year in land, and another thousand to be paid thee out of our treasury to support thy dignity."

"What do you think of that?" said Mme. Tussaud, almost choking with laughter. "Wonders will never cease, will they?"

"No, ma'am—they won't," gasped Mrs. Peckham.

"A marchioness! Oh, crikey, a marchioness!" cried Belinda, skipping about. "Oh, what will the butcher say!"

"And here," said Mme. Tussaud, taking a magic piece of paper from her pocket, "is a ticket for two for my exhibition. 'Admit bearer and friend.' It will do any day in the week."

"How *can* I thank you?" exclaimed Mrs. Peckham, gazing rapturously at the sacred pass.

It would be hard to say which she valued most—the title of Marchioness of Barnet, with a thousand marks a year in land and another out of the royal treasury to support her dignity, or the ticket for two to Mme. Tussaud's exhibition. It appeared to her as if her highest expectations in life were sat-

ished with that piece of paper in her hand. Belinda gazed so longingly at it that Mme. Tussaud said kindly, "Here is one for you, Belinda."

"Oh, mum—oh, mum—oh, mum!" sighed Belinda, and could say no more, her cup of joy was so full.

"Dost thou know, Bess," said Henry VIII, "that Mistress Peckham bears a wonderful resemblance to thy great-grandam, Elizabeth Woodville? Thou wert born to be a marchioness, Mistress Peckham."

"Bravo, Hal!" said Mme. Tussaud, aside, and then, aloud: "I must go up now to Lucy and Lydia."

And up she went, leaving Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth to entertain the Marchioness of Barnet and Belinda.

"Mme. la Tussaud," called Henry after her, "say to ma belle Lucie that we are pining for a sight of her sweet face."

CHAPTER XVI

A LITTLE STORM IN THE BREAKFAST-ROOM

FAMILY breakfast in Marybud Lodge was served at nine o'clock, and a few minutes before that hour Mr. Scarlett walked into the breakfast-room. It was situated in the front of the house and looked out upon the lawn. A great cedar-tree spread its branches far and wide; beyond was the lawn-tennis ground; beyond that, and all around, flower-beds and fruit-trees in profusion. Cherries, apples, and pears thrived in Marybud Lodge, as did also currants and gooseberries. The kitchen-garden was in a secluded part of the grounds.

The old gentleman had slept well, and of course was in no anxiety about Lucy not returning home on the previous night, as she was supposed to be safe with her friends in Cavendish Square, whom she was to visit—and would indeed have visited had it not been

for her fortunate falling-in with Mme. Tus-saud.

He looked on the breakfast-table for his letters; there were none. He looked for his newspapers; there were none. This violation of the regular routine of the day annoyed him, and he fussed and fidgeted about, and was poking here and there when Lydia entered the room; and as she did so everything looked so much brighter that it really seemed as if she must have brought a large supply of sunlight in with her.

You might walk twenty miles through city streets or country lanes without meeting a girl so delightfully sweet and pretty as Lydia. A bright, healthy English lass, neither too tall nor too short, neither dumpy nor thin, with hands and feet neither too small nor too large, with features well formed and a mouth full of the whitest ivory, set in the loveliest coral, with brown eyes that could glisten with fun or melt into tenderness, with a laugh so sparkling that when you heard it you could not help laughing with her, with a crown of brown hair which formed itself naturally into soft little curls (not too many of them) about

her forehead, and hung in graceful profusion (when allowed) about her white neck and shoulders—in short, she was just such a girl as you would like (if you are a very young unmarried gentleman) to have for a wife. You cannot have her, for she is bespoke; but Lucy, who will be another Lydia, is growing up for you, and I wish you joy.

As Lydia entered the breakfast-room and kissed her papa she looked like a rose.

As her love-affairs were not running smoothly, there must have been a reason for her gaiety. There was. Lucy, whom she was astonished to see in bed when she got up, had told her *all*. And when the first pleasant shock of the wonderful news had passed away, she eagerly awaited an introduction to Mme. Tussaud and the celebrities. Of course she was a little incredulous at first, but when Mme. Tussaud herself entered the room, the old lady gave Lucy an affectionate caress, and then turned to Lydia.

“You are Lydia,” she said. “Give me a kiss, my dear. You are just what I expected Lucy’s sister to be—only prettier; yes, my dear, really prettier—like a spring flower.”

Lydia laughed and blushed, and kissed the "fairy godmother" without the least sign of fear.

"I have been down to the kitchen," said Mme. Tussaud, briskly, "and have made it all right with Mrs. Peckham. Oh, my dear Lydia, if you had been with us last night and seen the goings-on, you would never have forgotten it. What do you think, Lucy? Henry VIII has made Mrs. Peckham a marchioness."

"A *marchioness!*" exclaimed Lucy and Lydia, both together.

"Yes, my dears, the Marchioness of Bar-net; so you must mind your p's and q's when you are ordering her about. Go down to her, Lucy; I will join you presently."

"Am I to go down, too?" asked Lydia.

"No, my dear. I want you to do something else. Well, Lucy, what are you waiting for?"

"I forgot to ask how they all are," said Lucy.

"My celebrities? Quite well, my dear. You will find Hal and Queen Bess in the kitchen, and the others are in the school-room, waiting for their breakfast. Richard Cœur

de Lion is keeping an eye on Richard III, who, as usual, is not in a very good humor; and my dear little Tom Thumb has been invaluable."

"Was n't cook surprised to see Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth?" asked Lucy. "What did she say?"

"Surprised! I should think she *was* surprised. As for what she said, she did not say much. Henry did most of the talking. If you had heard how he wheedled her, you would have died laughing. There, run down; he has been asking for you." She pushed Lucy good-humoredly out of the room, and shut the door upon her. "Now, Lydia, for our little bit of business. How far off does Harry Bower live?"

Lydia's eyes glistened. "About two miles from here."

"Of course," said Mme. Tussaud, with a twinkle in *her* eyes, "you have never written to him?"

"Oh, yes, I have—dozens and dozens of times," replied Lydia, roguishly.

"Humph! Does that comic little fellow whom Henry VIII calls Flip of the Odd know where Harry Bower lives?"



“ Richard Cœur de Lion is keeping an eye on
Richard III, who, as usual, is not
in a very good humor ”

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“ Yes.”

“ He has taken letters to Harry, eh? Now sit down and write to Harry, and tell him to be here at twelve o'clock sharp, without fail.”

“ But papa has forbidden him the house!” exclaimed Lydia.

“ Leave that to me. I am responsible for everything. Write the letter, and Flip shall take it. Tell him to come to the front door and ring the bell, and not to be surprised at anything he sees. He must not ask Flip any questions, because the boy is sworn to secrecy. Perhaps one of my celebrities will open the door to Harry. By the way, can he spare a sovereign or two?”

“ Oh, yes; he has a little income of his own.”

“ I am glad to hear it. Tell him to buy ten or twelve pounds of the very finest chocolate creams he can obtain. Of course you are fond of chocolate creams?”

“ Yes, indeed I am! Harry often brings me some.”

“ But you are not so fond of them as my celebrities are; they positively adore them. So you know what I want them for: Harry

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must get into their good graces. Now write your letter."

Lydia sat down, and this is what she wrote:

MY DEAREST HARRY: Flip will bring you this letter, and you are not to ask him any questions, because *he is sworn to secrecy*, but to do exactly what I tell you. *Our happiness depends upon it.*

The most wonderful thing has occurred, and if I wrote what it was you would hardly believe me, *so you must come and see for yourself.* I shall expect you at twelve o'clock. Ring the bell, and *don't run away if the gate is opened by a strange person dressed in a way that will make you stare.* I shall be waiting for you. Oh, my dear Harry, I am trembling with happiness while I write, and *I must not explain why.* I shall be waiting for you.

I don't know what is going to be done, but I have every confidence in the strange friends by whom I am surrounded. We have dear Lucy to thank for it. She came home *in the middle of the night*, when all of us here were asleep, and brought our friends with her. Just think of it! Is n't she brave?

Now there is a most important thing which you must be sure not to forget. You must buy *ten or twelve pounds of the best chocolate creams*, and bring them with you. They are not all for me, but *they are necessary in what is going to be done.*

I have no time to say more, because papa is waiting

for me, and *one of our kind friends is with me now*, and will give this letter to Flip.

With fondest love, my dear Harry, I am, and shall ever be,
Your LYDIA.

Mme. Tussaud took the letter, which she would not read, gave the happy and bewildered girl a kiss, and went down-stairs. And now you know why Lydia looked like a rose when she joined her papa in the breakfast-room.

Mr. Scarlett, a short, dumpy gentleman (his daughters inherited their grace and beauty from their mama, whom they had lost six years before), could not help noticing that Lydia's eyes were unusually bright and her cheeks unusually flushed, and he placed his own construction upon this change in her, for she had been very sad since Harry Bower had been banished from the house. On this day Lorimer Grimweed was coming to the Lodge with a new lease, which he was ready to sign and hand over to Mr. Scarlett in exchange for Lydia's promise to become his bride. The construction he placed upon Lydia's bright

looks was that she had thought over the matter, and was ready to accept Lorimer Grimweed, in which case he himself would not be turned out of the Lodge for which he had so great an affection.

“ Good girl! good girl! ” he said, pinching her cheek and returning her kiss. “ So you have made up your mind about Mr. Grimweed.”

“ Well, papa,” said Lydia, her voice ringing with the prospect of her new happiness, “ I certainly have made up my mind.”

“ That ’s right; that ’s right. Give me another kiss. I shall not be turned out of Marybud Lodge. What a delightful home it is! ”

“ Yes, papa, it is a delightful home—and this is a delightful day, is n’t it? ”

Mr. Scarlett rubbed his hands and forgot all about his newspapers. “ A most delightful day! Mr. Grimweed will be here at one o’clock with the new lease. It is a great weight off my mind. When shall the wedding be? ”

“ Between me and Mr. Grimweed, papa? ”

“ Yes, of course, my dear.”

“Never, papa.”

Mr. Scarlett fell back. “Never! Did you say never?”

“Yes, papa. I will never, never, never marry Mr. Grimweed!”

“You deceitful girl!” cried Mr. Scarlett, boiling over with anger. “You deserve to be put on bread and water—you deserve to be locked in your room for a month!”

“I am too old for that, papa. Oh, papa, you are good and kind, and if that hateful monster, Mr. Grimweed, had n’t come between us—”

“Don’t call names, miss. Mr. Grimweed is rich, while Harry Bower has n’t a shilling.”

“Harry has two hundred pounds a year, and we can live on that and be happy.”

“Do you mean to stand there and tell me that you would marry without my consent?”

“Harry has n’t spoken of such a dreadful thing, nor have I. We don’t mind waiting for years. I am only eighteen—I can wait till I ’m twenty-one; I sha’n’t be a *very* old woman even then.”

“I will never give my consent! When I say a thing I mean it. I am determined—de-

terminated! You must understand that, once for all."

"So am I, papa; and you must n't blame me for being so, because I inherit it from you. Dear papa, I don't want to make you angry—"

"Angry, miss!" he fumed. "I am perfectly cool—cool and determined."

"You would n't wish me to lead an unhappy life, would you, papa? I should be the most wretched girl in existence if I were compelled to marry Mr. Grimweed."

"Nothing of the sort, miss; you would be the happiest. Who should know best—you or I? And you—you refuse him?"

"Papa, I will *never* marry Mr. Grimweed!"

And then Lydia began to cry; but hearing Miss Pennyback's voice in the passage, she dried her eyes and looked so sweetly and entreatingly at her papa that if his heart had not been adamant it must have melted in the light of a fire so tender. But that was too much to expect of such a cool and determined man as old Mr. Scarlett.

CHAPTER XVII

AN INTERESTING CONVERSATION

“MISS PENNYBACK,” he demanded, when that lady presented herself, “where are my letters and papers?”

“I really cannot inform you, sir,” replied Miss Pennyback, whose night’s adventures had left dark rings round her eyes.

“There should be one letter at least,” said Mr. Scarlett, who, with all his faults, was very fond of his children, “a letter from Lucy.”

“But she came home, papa,” said Lydia.

“Gracious powers!” gasped Miss Pennyback, under her breath. “Then I *did* hear her, and I *did* go into the kitchen! But how—how did I get out of it?”

“She did come home!” exclaimed Mr. Scarlett. “What did Mr. Grimweed mean by saying she was not at the station?”

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“ You had better ask him, papa. Here *is* Lucy.”

“ Merciful powers ! ” cried Miss Pennyback, at the sight of Lucy, who came bounding in and threw her arms round her father’s neck.

“ Why do you cry, ‘ Merciful powers ! ’ Miss Pennyback ? ” asked Mr. Scarlett. “ Are you in pain ? ”

“ No, sir ; the words escaped me unawares.”

“ No reason for them that I can see. Did you not find the Mortimers prepared to entertain you, Lucy ? You did not return with Lydia ? ”

“ I came home late, papa, and did not like to disturb you.”

Mr. Scarlett did not pursue the subject, but fussed about for his newspapers. He stamped, he rang the bell for Rowley, and the man’s replies to the questions put to him were so confused that Mr. Scarlett became more furious than ever.

“ You have hidden the papers, you numskull,” he cried. “ You have sold them, you have burnt them ! You are all in a plot against me ! ”

“ If there is a plot in this house against the

peace of mind of the inmates, sir," said Miss Pennyback, "I am a victim as well as yourself."

"What on earth do you mean, Miss Pennyback?"

"Nothing, sir, nothing," said Miss Pennyback, meekly. "I was merely making an observation."

All this did not improve matters, nor did the entrance of Molly with the breakfast. Molly was round and buxom, and she was so nearly suffocating with suppressed laughter that her face was as red as a boiled lobster.

"She has seen them," whispered Lucy to Lydia.

"What are you two whispering about?" shouted Mr. Scarlett. "And you, Molly, what are *you* grinning at, and holding your breath as if you are about to explode?"

"I wish Molly would n't keep looking at me in that way, Liddy," whispered Lucy. "And see how Miss Pennyback is glaring at us!"

"Papa," said Lydia, "the breakfast is getting quite cold."

"Yes, let us have breakfast, papa," said

Lucy, taking the old gentleman's hand and leading him to the table. "I will see about your papers afterward."

There was only one person in the establishment who could resist Lucy's coaxing ways, and that was Miss Pennyback; all the others, from Mrs. Peckham down to Belinda, were her willing slaves. As for her papa, he would do anything for her. So he seated himself at the breakfast-table with a more amiable expression on his face; but the glare in Miss Pennyback's eyes remained at high pressure. Lucy and Lydia recognized the ominous signs, and prepared for battle. Indeed, it was Lydia who struck the first blow by saying:

"You look as if you had had a bad night, Miss Pennyback."

Lucy pressed her sister's foot under the table; she considered the remark injudicious. But Lydia's nerves were tingling. A crisis was impending; the sooner it came, the better.

"I have passed," observed Miss Pennyback, "the most extraordinary and horrible night in my existence."

Mr. Scarlett raised his head and said: "Everything this morning is extraordinary

and horrible. What was the cause, Miss Pennyback, of your passing such a night in my house?"

"It almost exceeds my powers to explain, sir."

"Delusions, perhaps," observed Lydia, innocently. "Another cup of tea, papa?"

"This is very singular," said Mr. Scarlett.

"It was real," said Miss Pennyback, "too, too real. I cannot—no, I cannot allow the mystery to remain where it is."

"Mystery!" exclaimed Mr. Scarlett. "Mystery! What mystery?"

"That is the question that is agitating me, sir. I beg you to believe that I am in my calm and sober senses."

Mr. Scarlett stared at her, and was suddenly haunted by a suspicion that it was she who, by her singular behavior, had made everything go wrong this morning.

"I trust, sir," she continued, "that during my residence in this honored home I have given satisfaction."

"I have no complaint to make," he answered stiffly, "nor has Lucy made any complaint."

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"Oh, no, papa; oh, no, Miss Pennyback," said Lucy.

"I am happy to hear it, sir. It has been my constant endeavor to instruct my pupil in those studies and accomplishments in which society demands that a young lady should be proficient. Have I your permission to ask Miss Lucy a few questions?"

"Certainly."

"It is coming," thought Lucy, and there was a little fluttering at her heart.

"The first question, Lucy, is whether I heard you exclaim in the middle of the night, 'Miss Pennyback! Dear Miss Pennyback!'"

"Papa," said Lydia, interposing to protect Lucy, whose face had flushed up, "how *is* Lucy to know what Miss Pennyback heard in the middle of the night?"

"It is certainly not reasonable," said Mr. Scarlett; "but as Miss Pennyback appears to attach importance to the question, perhaps Lucy will answer it."

"I did say it," Lucy confessed.

"In the middle of the night, Lucy?" asked Miss Pennyback, with a lifting of her eyebrows.

“ Yes, in the middle of the night.”

“ You were in the kitchen at the time? ”

“ Yes, I was.”

“ And you were not alone? ”

“ No, I was not alone.”

“ Then my senses did not deceive me,” said Miss Pennyback, “ and I *did* see them! ”

“ Who ’s ‘ them ’ ? ” asked Lucy. She was still disposed to put off the full shock of the discovery, much preferring that it should be left in the hands of Mme. Tussaud.

“ ‘ Who ’s them ’ ! ” cried Miss Pennyback, raising her hands in horror. “ Is this the result of my educational efforts in the direction of an elegant expression of the English language? Who *are* them, if you please, Lucy.”

“ If you call that good grammar,” said Lucy, demurely, “ who are them? ” leaving the matter little if any better than it was before.

Miss Pennyback bit her lip, and addressed Mr. Scarlett, who could not help smiling: “ It was in the dead of night, sir, that I was awakened by sounds of revelry in the kitchen. I arose and descended the stairs in order to ascertain the cause of the disturbance—I

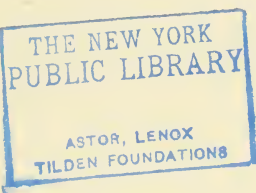
arose and descended the—I arose and descended the—the—”

These repetitions were uttered very slowly, each word in a lower and more amazed key than the one that preceded it. Her voice trailed off, and she sank back in her chair, with horror in her eyes.

“You have said three times,” said Mr. Scarlett, testily, “that you arose and descended, and now you look as if you had seen a ghost. Explain yourself, Miss Pennyback, or I shall begin to suspect that you are not in your sober senses.”

The only explanation it was in the power of Miss Pennyback to give was to raise a trembling hand and point to the lawn. Mr. Scarlett, who was about to lift his fork to his mouth, turned his head in the direction of Miss Pennyback’s finger, and on his face was now depicted an astonishment no less marked than that on the face of the governess.

He held his fork suspended in the air, and with open mouth and staring eyes gazed at the extraordinary sight that presented itself.





“All the celebrities were there with the exception of the Headsman”

CHAPTER XVIII

A GREAT MANY THINGS OCCUR

NEVER since Marybud Lodge had been a boarding-school, and the boys had scampered over the grounds in their play-hours, had the lawn presented an appearance so animated, and never at any time a picture so astounding. It was so electrifying, so inconceivable, incredible, and unimaginable as to deprive Mr. Scarlett of the power of speech.

All the celebrities were there with the exception of the Headsman, who, with his ax, was still locked up in the school-room cupboard. They had had a good breakfast and were enjoying the open air in the blithest spirits. Henry VIII was walking between Mary Queen of Scots and Mme. Sainte Amaranthe, and amusing them with his merry chatter. Queen Elizabeth and Tom Thumb were strolling side by side, engaged in sprightly conversation, he playing the squire

of dames as if to the manner born. Richard I, Charles II, and Oliver Cromwell were having a game of leap-frog, and roaring with laughter when one of them came to grief, which Richard III was maliciously endeavoring to compass by putting out his leg to trip them up. Guy Fawkes, with folded arms, was moodily looking on. Houqua was walking from one group to another, with the eternal childlike smile on his face, and saying softly to himself: "Velly good. Can do. The philosopher Mencius observes, 'The gleet man is he who does not lose his child-heart.'" Loushkin had climbed to the top of the cedar-tree, where he seemed to be hundreds of feet in height, and Mme. Tussaud was standing below, looking up at him one moment, and the next chiding those of her celebrities who were transgressing the rules she had set for them.

It was truly a startling scene, and the dazed expression on the countenances of Mr. Scarlett and Miss Pennyback was a sufficient indication of their feelings. Their state of mind was by no means reassured by the astounding behavior of Belinda, whose rotund face seemed to be in great danger of exploding



“ Their state of mind was by no means reassured
by the astounding behavior of Belinda ”

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with suppressed laughter. They were, so to speak, paralyzed, unable to move or think; and they might have remained in this state for a considerable time had not Lucy rushed out of the room, quickly followed by Lydia, who had no desire to stop and be questioned by Miss Pennyback and her papa.

Even this interruption only partially restored the senses of Mr. Scarlett and Miss Pennyback. Feebly turning his head, he said in a broken voice:

“Do my eyes deceive me? Am I the victim of an enchantment?”

“I do not wonder, sir, at your asking whether your eyes are deceiving you,” replied Miss Pennyback. “You are but experiencing my own sensations in the middle of last night, when, having fainted away in the kitchen, I found myself in my bedroom. It is even yet a mystery to me how I reached that refuge; I could not have walked to it. Can you offer a solution, sir, of an incident so unparalleled?” Mr. Scarlett gazed before him in blank bewilderment, and Miss Pennyback continued: “This is a strange sight that we behold. I perceive that that immensely tall man has

come down from the cedar-tree, and is now engaged in conversation with that Little Old Woman in Black."

"There is no doubt that we are awake, Miss Pennyback?"

"It does not admit of doubt, sir. You used a word which appears to me appropriate to what we have gone through, and to what we are at present witnessing."

"I have no recollection of any word," said Mr. Scarlett, rubbing his brow in a vacant manner. "So far as I am aware, I have no recollection of anything in particular."

"The word I refer to, sir, is 'enchantment.' We are not under the spell of a delusion: we are the victims of an enchantment, and the 'Arabian Nights' comes irresistibly to my mind. In the drama that is being enacted on the lawn we have no part; we are, as it were, the audience. Lucy is seemingly employing herself in the ceremony of introducing Miss Lydia to her friends. For friends they undoubtedly are, or she would not be on smiling terms with them. The regal gentleman who is shaking hands with Miss Lydia is the great King Henry VIII

come to life again—if such a thing *can* be. And surely I recognize the great and good Queen Elizabeth. I perceive also a personage who bears a remarkable likeness to Guy Fawkes, and an exceedingly small but very active individual. The Little Old Woman in Black is the busiest of the party, and seems to be the ruling spirit. And there! do you perceive, sir, there come all your domestics,—Molly, Maria, Belinda, Mrs. Peckham, Rowley, and Flip,—and that some communication is passing between them and the little old woman? ”

“The servants do not seem to be frightened, Miss Pennyback.”

“They do not, sir, though I detect an expression of anxiety on Mrs. Peckham’s countenance. And, I declare, there is Belinda talking to that abnormally tall person who is dressed in a foreign military costume. She is actually making eyes at him, and Molly and Maria are following her example.”

“He is probably a soldier,” said Mr. Scarlett. “Our servant-girls adore the military, and the taller the man, the more they adore

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him. Belinda looks as if she could fall down and worship the giant."

But what was going on out on the lawn in the meantime?

The purpose of Loushkin climbing to the top of the cedar-tree was to make a survey of the surrounding country, and report thereon to Mme. Tussaud. This was accomplished when Lucy and Lydia came on the lawn; and then followed Lydia's introduction to the celebrities. She was overwhelmed with flatteries and compliments, and of course it was Henry VIII who was the most outspoken in his expressions of admiration.

"Welladay," he cried, "the maiden is passing fair! Lucie, ma belle, if thou art outshone, it is because thy fair sister is in her springtime, which thou hast not yet reached. Beshrew me! a lovelier maid we never set eyes on."

This caused Lydia to blush and Mary Queen of Scots to sigh.

It was at this point that the domestics of the establishment made their appearance.

Mrs. Peckham was in a perplexing difficulty. Last night's raid upon the larder, and the

ample breakfast she had provided for the celebrities,—whose appetites were enormous, and who kept on crying for more bacon and eggs,—had exhausted her resources. Dinner had to be provided for at least a score of persons, and she had nothing to cook. She had not the courage to go to her master, so, accompanied by her subordinates, she appealed to Mme. Tussaud, and asked what was to be done.

“This is very serious,” said Mme. Tussaud. “Lucy, is that your papa in the breakfast-room, staring at us?”

Lucy looked up and replied, “Yes, ma’am.”

“And, if I don’t mistake, that lady with him is Miss Pennyback.”

“Yes, it is, ma’am.”

“The supplies which Mrs. Peckham requires will cost a great deal of money. Your papa does n’t seem to be in a good humor, and I have to say something to him before I can venture to make a demand on his purse; but money we must have.”

“I have five pounds,” said Lydia.

“Why, where did you get it, Lyddy?” asked Lucy.

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“Papa gave it me before breakfast,” said Lydia, laughing as she gave the five sovereigns to Mme. Tussaud. “When Harry comes, he will give us as much as we want.”

“Money is not our only difficulty,” said Mme. Tussaud, patting Lydia’s cheek. “We dare not let any of the domestics out of the place to purchase supplies. They would gossip to the tradesmen, and all the fat would be in the fire.”

“You can trust Harry,” said Lydia.

“Good,” said Mme. Tussaud. “We will appoint him our controller of the commissariat. He alone shall be allowed to go in and out the house.”

She hastened to Mrs. Peckham, told her that things would be all right, and desired her to make out a list of her requirements. Then she called a council of war, at which, after solemn deliberation, the following articles were drawn up:

1. That Marybud Lodge be declared to be in a state of siege, and be regarded as a fortress.
2. That only two persons be admitted into the fortress—Harry Bower and Lorimer Grimweed.
3. That none of the celebrities, nor any of the do-

mestics, nor any member of the Scarlett family, nor Lorimer Grimweed, be permitted, under any pretext whatever, to leave the fortress or the fortifications.

4. That only Harry Bower shall have free ingress and egress.

5. That by day and night the strictest watch be kept upon the two entrances to the fortress, and that all the gentlemen take this duty upon themselves, the duration of each watch to be two hours, when the guard will be relieved.

6. That knocks at the door and rings at the bell be answered by Sir Rowley and Flip of the Odd, under the surveillance of the guard, who shall keep tight hold of their collars when the door is opened, and shall not allow themselves to be seen by the persons calling.

A further article, proposed by Richard III, that any person transgressing any of the articles be instantly put to death, was rejected, much to that monarch's displeasure.

During the time employed in these deliberations Mr. Scarlett and Miss Pennyback remained in the breakfast-room, and it was with trepidation that they now observed the Little Old Woman in Black advancing toward them. There were French windows to the room, opening out upon the lawn, and upon one of

the panes Mme. Tussaud tapped and motioned them to admit her.

As Miss Pennyback did not stir, Mr. Scarlett opened the window himself, and when Mme. Tussaud entered he had the politeness to offer her a chair.

"Thank you," said Mme. Tussaud; "for the present I prefer to stand. Now, why do you two foolish people remain indoors on such a fine day as this? Why do you not enjoy the air?"

"Are we free to issue forth?" asked Miss Pennyback, in the voice of one who has suffered imprisonment for a great number of years.

"Perfectly free. But perhaps it will be as well that we come to an understanding. Miss Pennyback will do me the favor to retire while I confer with the master of Marybud Lodge."

"You have addressed me by name," said Miss Pennyback. "Allow me to observe that you have the advantage of me."

"You wish to know who I am, but if you were familiar with the attractions of the metropolis you would not ask the question. All

the civilized world—and even some barbarians—know that I am Mme. Tussaud.”

“Of waxwork fame?” inquired Miss Pennyback.

“Precisely. Of waxwork fame.”

“That, madame, is simply impossible. I am not *quite* out of my senses.”

“Not quite, I hope,” said Mme. Tussaud, with a waggish nod. “So you think it impossible I can be Mme. Tussaud?”

“The idea is ridiculous.”

“Is it? I was under a different impression. However, we will not argue. Kindly retire. I have matters of private interest to discuss with Lucy’s and Lydia’s papa. Sweet girls! You are to be envied, sir. It is not many fathers who are blessed with daughters so charming. Miss Pennyback, did you hear me ask you to retire?”

“So far as I am aware,” replied that lady, “my sense of hearing is not impaired. I hear every word you say.”

“Well?”

“I consider it advisable to remain; I prefer to remain. You made the remark that every one is free to do as he (or she) pleases.”

"Within limits, Miss Pennyback," said Mme. Tussaud, with a genial laugh. "Be advised. If you stay here it will be at your peril."

"I shall stay here," said Miss Pennyback, "unless Mr. Scarlett commands me to retire, or you use force to eject me."

"I shall not use force," said Mme. Tussaud, her eyes twinkling with fun, "but I shall take steps to render you deaf to the conversation between me and your employer. Listen. I am going to count three slowly, to give you time to change your mind. If when the last number passes my lips you are still in the room, I shall practise upon you a harmless little piece of magic."

"If you think to frighten me," said Miss Pennyback, making a brave show of resistance, though she was inwardly quaking, "you are greatly mistaken."

"Very good," said Mme. Tussaud. "One—"

"I shall not stir from this room," said Miss Pennyback, in a trembling voice, "unless Mr. Scarlett commands me."

"Two—"

“ You may count till you’re blue in the face, madame.”

“ Three.”

“ I have heard some absurd things in my life,” said Miss Pennyback, “ but of all the—”

Mme. Tussaud touched her with the magic cane, and she became instantly dumb and immovable.

CHAPTER XIX

HOW MME. TUSSAUD BRINGS PAPA TO REASON

“**N**OW we can have our chat in comfort,” said Mme. Tussard to Mr. Scarlett, who was gazing with astonishment at the remarkable appearance of Miss Pennyback. Her eyes were wide open and fixed, her hand was raised as though to ward off a blow, her lips were parted, but not another word did she utter.

“It *is* enchantment,” he murmured.

“Yes, my dear sir, if you like to call it so,” said Mme. Tussaud. “You need not be at all alarmed about Miss Pennyback. She is perfectly happy, and will be none the worse for her little nap when I awaken her. As we are to discuss family matters, I thought it advisable in your interests that she should not be present.”

“But she *is* present,” said Mr. Scarlett, his breath coming short and thick.

“In body, but not in spirit. To all intents and purposes she might be at the north pole. Lucy tells me you indulge in snuff. Oblige me with a pinch. Thank you. Try mine. In my young days snuff-taking was all the fashion, but the fashion has died out, as most fashions do. There is, however, one fashion, Mr. Scarlett, that since the day of creation has never changed, and that to the end of time never will change.”

“Pardon me a moment,” said Mr. Scarlett, casting a troubled glance at the rigid form of Miss Pennyback. “Are you sure she is comfortable?”

“Perfectly so. The sight of her seems to annoy you. Shall I put her behind this screen?”

“No, no! The consciousness that she was lurking behind a screen would distress me. You were observing—”

“That there is one fashion which will never be out of date. I allude to the fashion of falling in love. I mean no offense, sir, but may I ask if you married for love?”

“I did,” Mr. Scarlett blurted out. The confession seemed forced from him.

“ You were not forced to marry a lady you detested? ”

“ No, certainly not.”

“ And the lady you married, the mother of Lucy and Lydia, was not forced to marry a man *she* detested? ”

“ N-n-no.”

“ And you were happy? Neither of you ever had occasion to repent it? ”

“ No. But, if you will excuse me,—”

“ Excuse *me*. Following the good example of her parents, Lydia has fallen in love, and it is to bring happiness to her young heart that I and my celebrities have journeyed to Marybud Lodge.”

“ There is no deception, is there? ” asked Mr. Scarlett. “ You are what you represent yourself to be? ”

“ Upon my honor as a lady of world-wide fame,” replied Mme. Tussaud, “ there is no deception.”

“ And the ladies and gentlemen playing on my lawn? ”

“ Are what *they* represent themselves to be. The public journals would soon bring me to book if they were not. The public labors

under a delusion respecting us. They think that we have no feelings, that we have no heart. They are mistaken. We are ever ready to come forward in defense of the weak, to take up their cause and make it our own. When next you visit my show and gaze upon my motionless form, you will perhaps believe that nothing escapes my eyes or ears, and that when I hear a little child sob quietly to herself, it is my earnest desire to ascertain the cause of her grief, in order that I may relieve it. That is what happened last night, when most of my visitors had gone down to the refreshment-room.

“A little child had been brought to my show, and her friends, who were young lovers, had lost sight of her. So she was left to herself, and was sitting on a bench near me, with a sorrow on her sweet face that penetrated my heart. No persons were near her to witness her distress. The tears in her eyes grew larger, her little breast heaved. It was an inward grief which was oppressing her, a secret trouble for which I thought there must surely be a remedy. I sympathized so deeply with the dear girl that I could no longer r^e

strain myself. I spoke to her—I learned the cause of her misery—”

“Stop a moment, please,” said Mr. Scarlett. “When you spoke to her did n’t she run away?”

“No. I never speak to a child except in kindness. Ah, my dear sir, it often happens that, wrapped in our own selfish wishes and desires, we elder people are apt to be careless in regard to the happiness of the young children dependent upon us, are apt to forget that we draw our sweetest happiness from them, that our lives would be desolate without them, and the world a desert.

“The gratitude which our children owe to us for the sacrifices we make for them is small in comparison to the gratitude we owe to them for the daily, the hourly pleasure they bring into our lives.”

She wiped her eyes, and Mr. Scarlett wiped his.

“Shall we, then,” she continued, “be deaf to our child’s pleading—our child, now grown to be a woman, and one of the sweetest flowers in the garden of our house—shall we change the love she bore for us to hate?”

"Hate!" cried Mr. Scarlett, clasping his hands. "No, no—not that!"

"Yes, that," said Mme. Tussaud. "Put yourself in the maiden's place; see with her eyes, feel with her heart, judge with her mind, and find the answer. You know that the little child I speak of as being overwhelmed with grief is your daughter Lucy."

"Yes, I know."

"And that the maiden I speak of is Lydia."

"Yes, I know."

"Oblige me by telling me if you consider Harry Bower a despicable character."

"By no means a despicable character. Quite the reverse."

"Can you bring evidence to prove that he is unworthy the love of an English maiden?"

"No, I cannot."

"Is he not an earnest, upright young fellow, and does he not love your daughter as a girl should be loved, truly, sincerely, and for her sake alone?"

"Yes, I think he does."

"Now, can you give the Grimweed man as good a character?"

"N-no, not exactly. I don't believe I

can. They are different kind of men, you know."

"Oh, I know. How old is Harry?"

"Twenty-five."

"And Lydia is eighteen. Very suitable. How old is the Grimweed man?"

"He says he is forty-five."

"He says! Then we can put three years on, at least. That will make him forty-eight. When Lydia is forty he will be seventy. How does that strike you?" Mr. Scarlett was silent. "Well, well, I'll not press you, for you have met me very frankly. Now about this lease of Marybud Lodge, which the Grimweed man will not renew unless Lydia consents to marry him. Suppose we make him give you the lease without any such stipulation, will you consent to Harry's engagement with Lydia?"

"Willingly, willingly! I always liked Harry Bower better than Mr. Grimweed. But, you see, it would well-nigh break my heart to be compelled to leave the Lodge—"

"Best not speak of breaking hearts," said Mme. Tussaud, grimly. "I told Lydia to write to Harry, and he will soon be here. You have no objection?"

“None in the least. Though it is rather awkward, for Mr. Grimweed will be here, too, with the new lease drawn up, ready for signature.”

“Never mind that. I will attend to the awkwardness. There will be such an array of signatures on that lease as witnesses as would make autograph-hunters stare. I suppose, Mr. Scarlett, that we may look upon ourselves as welcome guests?”

“Quite welcome—but rather distracting and bewildering, you know.”

“I dare say; but, as I heard Queen Elizabeth remark to Tom Thumb this morning, ‘There are more things in heaven and earth’ (Mr. Scarlett) ‘than are dreamt of in our philosophy.’”

“Queen Elizabeth! Genuine? Really genuine?”

“Really genuine. And Henry VIII and Mary Queen of Scots and Oliver Cromwell, and others, with whom you will presently make acquaintance. There is positively no deception. You will find them very pleasant company. Do you invite us to dinner, Mr. Scarlett?”

“Yes, certainly—though I fear we are not very well provided for such a large number of guests.”

“We will attend to all that. That dear Lydia of yours has given us five pounds, and of course you will contribute toward the expenses. Thank you.” Mr. Scarlett had handed her two five-pound notes. “Mrs. Peckham, whom Henry VIII has created Marchioness of Barnet—”

“What!” shouted Mr. Scarlett. “My cook a marchioness!”

“It is quite true,” said Mme. Tussaud, holding her sides with laughter, “with a thousand marks a year in land, and another thousand from his royal treasury to support her dignity. And he has made Rowley a knight—he is Sir Rowley now.”

“Marchioness of Barnet! Sir Rowley!” gasped Mr. Scarlett, great beads of perspiration bursting out on his forehead.

“Yes. At what hour do you dine?” asked Mme. Tussaud, in a matter-of-fact tone.

“At any hour convenient to their Majesties,” replied Mr. Scarlett, the feeling of

strangeness at being surrounded by such singular visitors beginning to wear away.

"We will say seven o'clock," said Mme. Tussaud, "and we will lunch upon the lawn at half-past one. Afternoon tea, of course?"

"Of course. We always have a cup."

"Most refreshing. Was I right in supposing that you would not have wished Miss Pennyback to hear our conversation?"

"I should not have wished it."

"It is quite private between us. Honor—"

"Bright," he added briskly.

"Honor bright. As my dear little Tom Thumb would say, shake."

They shook hands, and then he looked at the statuesque figure of Miss Pennyback and said: "Will she remain in that state long? I am really anxious about her."

"I will now restore her to consciousness."

"One moment, I beg. Could you do that to me?"

"I can do it to any one who displeases me, or whom I wish to punish. It is done with this cane. Very simple."

"Far from it. It is most astonishing. Oblige me by bringing her to."

Mme. Tussaud deliberately arose, and, reaching over, touched Miss Pennyback with the magic cane.

“—I never heard a more absurd thing than that,” said Miss Pennyback.

“Than what?” asked Mr. Scarlett, his eyes by this time almost starting out of his poor bewildered head.

“Did you not catch what I said, sir?” said Miss Pennyback, with extreme vivacity. “I remarked to this ridiculous old lady that I had heard some absurd things in my life, but of all the absurd things I ever heard, nothing was more absurd than her threatening to practise her magic arts upon me. Magic arts, indeed! I should like to know if we live in a civilized age or not.”

“Miss Pennyback,” said Mr. Scarlett, “when you were making that remark to Mme. Tussaud, did you happen to look at the clock?”

“I cast my eyes in that direction, sir, and observed that it was a quarter to eleven. Merciful powers! It is now five minutes to twelve!”

“An interval of an hour and ten minutes,” said Mme. Tussaud, “during which Mr.

Scarlett and I have had our little chat on some private family affairs without your hearing a single word of it."

"Quite true, Miss Pennyback," said Mr. Scarlett. "We have been discussing private matters while you were asleep. As you perceive,"—he waved his hand familiarly toward the lawn,—“a number of distinguished guests are paying me a visit, and we must show them proper hospitality. Lunch at half-past one, afternoon tea at half-past four, and dinner at seven."

"The whole company, sir?"

"The whole company. It does not come strictly within the scope of your duties, but perhaps you will kindly see that all the leaves are put in the dining-table, and I shall be pleased if you will assist us in entertaining. My daughters will attend to the flowers. I particularly wish the dining-room to be bright and cheerful."

"And every room and every person in the house," said Mme. Tussaud. "Bright and cheerful."

"You shall be obeyed, sir," said Miss Pennyback, meekly.

"Lydia and Lucy and I will assist you in

the domestic arrangements," said Mme. Tus-saud, "and I recommend you to make yourself agreeable. If you do not, I shall send you to sleep for two or three days, and have you conveyed to your chamber, as I did last night when you swooned in the kitchen. And please be nice and amiable with my people. Henry VIII is a most generous monarch, and scatters rewards with a lavish hand upon those who please him. He has already made Mrs. Peckham a marchioness, and Rowley a knight—"

"Merciful powers!" ejaculated Miss Pennyback.

"And who knows that he may not confer a title on the intellectual lady who instructs Lucy in history? There are more unlikely things than that. Now, *will* you make yourself agreeable?"

Miss Pennyback was conquered; she was incapable of further resistance. "It shall be my endeavor," she said in a faint voice.

"That's a sensible creature. Mr. Scarlett, will you give me your arm? You may join us when you wish, Miss Pennyback. In ratifi-

cation of our friendship oblige me by taking a pinch of snuff."

Miss Pennyback dared not refuse. She applied a pinch to her nose, and was instantly attacked with a violent fit of sneezing. When she recovered she saw Mme. Tussaud and Mr. Scarlett walking toward the celebrities on the lawn.

"It seems real, it looks real, it feels real," she murmured. "What am I to think? Have all the years of my life been nothing but a dream, or is the world coming to an end?"

CHAPTER XX

LULLA, LULLA, LULLABY

THE appearance of the grounds of Marybud Lodge did not favor the idea that the world was coming to an end, what was taking place thereon being particularly lively and jolly. The little estate having no regular orchard, the fruit-trees were dotted about here, there, and everywhere, in the most charming disregard of mathematical system; and this made it all the more delightful, because you were continually coming upon a fruit-tree when you least expected it. The apples and pears were growing, but were not yet eatable; the cherries, however, were quite ripe and very fine, one white-heart tree in particular eliciting a chorus of admiring "oh's!" Loushkin's tremendous height gave him a great advantage over the other celebrities, and being a glutton in the eating of fruit, he stuffed himself with cherries as fast

as he could pluck them. To the general outcry that he was not playing fair he paid no attention. Cries of "Unfair!" "Oh, you greedy!" fell upon deaf ears. He paid no regard to them, and looked down upon the royal pigmies with disdain. None of the warriors had the hardihood to come to blows with him; even the Lion-heart did not feel himself equal to such a contest.

It was Tom Thumb who solved the difficulty, and who once more proved to be the hero of the party.

"I'll be lambasted if I'm going to stand this!" he cried; and he ran to the kitchen and returned with Mrs. Peckham's toasting-fork, with which he prodded the giant's legs, by way of little pin-pricks, which made him stamp and roar. But Tom easily dodged the huge legs; nimbly and gleefully did he skip in and out, like a school-boy playing a game, and continued to tease Loushkin till the giant could stand it no longer, and cried a truce. To show that he bore no malice, he hoisted Tom up into the tree, and the little man climbed to the higher branches, loaded with magnificent cherries, which he threw down

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to the eager celebrities, who feasted on them to their heart's content. They were all very gay, and behaved more like children than the famous people they were. It was hard to believe that the world, at one time and another, stood in awe of them. Queen Elizabeth had taken a great fancy to Lydia, who had put cherries with double stalks over Lucy's ears and her own, and so far unbent as to say:

"Those cherry ear-rings in thine ears become thee marvelously well. Fix a pair in mine, maiden."

The fashion being set, all the ladies followed suit, as is the way of ladies, and were presently walking about decked with cherry ear-rings. Richard III, in a crafty voice, was complimenting Mary Queen of Scots upon her beautifully shaped ears, which these adornments, he declared, made even more beautiful, when she, taking his compliments in earnest, asked him to sling a hammock for her between two trees. This he proceeded to do, and when he had finished, he offered his hand to the lady to assist her. But Tom Thumb, who had been watching him, sprang forward and cried:



“ To show that he bore no malice, Loushkin hoisted
Tom up into the tree ”

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“Do not use it, Scotland’s Queen! See—he has so cunningly twined the ropes that the moment you get into the hammock you will fall to the ground.” Then, turning to the crooked king, he said: “You will earn the tar and feathers yet, Richard Three, and I shall be glad to be at the barbecue.”

“Pest on thee!” exclaimed Richard III. “How darest thou interfere, and what meanest thou by thy tar and feathers?”

“It is a national institootion, monarch,” replied Tom Thumb, “—an institution which the free and enlightened citizens of a great republic are much skilled in and greatly proud of.”

“Nay, Tom of the Thumb,” said Richard Cœur de Lion, “thou canst not claim that novel penalty as a national institution, for it is one of our own ordinances, devised for the punishment of knaves when we were on the English throne.”

“Knave in thy teeth!” cried Richard III, “darest thou apply that epithet to us?”

“Ay, thou false rogue. I dare that, and more, and will prove it, an thou wilt, on thy scurvy pate.”

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“Bully for you!” said Tom Thumb. “Now, Richard Three, speak your little speaklet and show your muscle.”

But the surly monarch slunk away, muttering direst vengeance against the little man and all his royal cousins.

Queen Elizabeth, who had been standing near, said to Lucy:

“Our gallant little Tom of the Thumb hath a shrewd head upon his shoulders. Had he more inches he would have been a great soldier. As for the hammock, we deem such beds a sweet resting-place for babes, while the careful mother, rocking it, sings a lullaby. We do not recall that Will Shakspeare wrote a lullaby for babes. If he had done so it would surely be sung in every English home. There are some sweet lullaby words in that marvelous play ‘A Midsummer Nights Dreame,’ writ in the true spirit of poesie. Titania—do you know who Titania was, child?”

“No, your Majesty,” replied Lucy, embarrassed at having to display her ignorance.

“You should, child. She was the fairy

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queen, and fell in love with a donkey. Titania says to her train:

‘Come, now a Roundel, and a Fairy song;
 . . . Sing me now asleepe,
Then to your offices, and let me rest.’

How doth the chorus run? ‘M, ’m, ’m! Ha,
I have it:

‘Philomele, with melody,
 Sing in your sweet Lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby,
 Never harme, nor spell, nor charme,
Come our lovely Lady nye,
So good night, with Lullaby.’”

“Lulla, lulla, lullaby,” sang Lucy to herself. “How beautiful it is! ‘So good night, with Lullaby. Lulla, lulla, lullaby.’ And here is the prettiest daisy-chain of all for you. I love you, Queen Elizabeth.”

“And we love thee, sweet child,” said Queen Elizabeth. “When our revels here are ended we shall be always pleased to see thee in our court at Marylebone. It will gladden our eyes to look on thee when thou art grown to be a maiden like thy sister Lydia.”

“I will come often,” said Lucy, and went

on singing "Lulla, lulla, lullaby," as she moved about the grounds. She could not forget the words, nor, for that matter, did she wish to forget them.

"And we lay it upon thee," continued Queen Elizabeth, "that now and again thou shalt devote an hour to the sweet singer whose poems shed luster on our reign. Whither is the fair Lydia flying? There is quicksilver in her pretty feet. Goeth she to put a girdle round the earth?"

"To the front gate," cried Lucy, starting up. "I hear Harry Bower's voice!"

"Run, child, run. Our trusty knight, Tom of the Thumb, will remain by our side."

Oliver Cromwell was keeping guard when the front door-bell rang, and kept his hand on Sir Rowley's collar as the old gardener limped forward to open the gate.

"Be that you, Mr. Bower?" Sir Rowley called.

"Yes, Rowley," answered Harry, outside.

"Open the gate—quick!" cried Lydia.

"Don't be frightened, Harry!"

In a twinkling the gate was open and shut, Harry was inside, and Oliver Cromwell, stern

and straight, was looking down upon the young man.

Lydia rushed into Harry's arms and kissed him, and he kissed her. They forgot that everybody was looking on.

Cromwell frowned. Mary Queen of Scots and Mme. Sainte Amaranthe laughed.

Harry Bower had in his arms a packet of immense size.

"I have brought them, Lydia," he whispered.

"The chocolate creams, Harry?"

"Yes; fourteen pounds in pound bags—I bought some of every sort they had in the shop."

He did not show any astonishment at what was going on around him, whatever he might have felt. Lydia's letter had prepared him for the most amazing events, and he kept saying to himself as he walked to Marybud Lodge: "Harry, my boy, you must not be surprised at anything you see. There is something very mysterious behind all this, but Lydia knows what she is about, so be prepared for wonders." That is why he did not take to his heels when he saw all those

strangely attired celebrities staring at him, and why he smiled quite brightly when a little old woman in black came forward and said:

“Take him away, Lucy and Lydia, and tell him everything.”

So the two girls conducted the fortunate young man to a secluded part of the grounds called the Nut Walk, and poured the wonderful news into his ears. He took it all very coolly, the only remarks he made while they were talking being, “Yes, yes, yes,” “Oh, of course,” “Very natural.”

“But are you not surprised, Harry?” asked Lydia.

“A little—inside of me,” he answered.

“You would never have guessed, would you?”

“Never. But now that I know what it is, and see them all walking about, and hear them all talking, it seems the most natural thing in the world. What did you say in your letter? That you had every confidence in the strange friends by whom you were surrounded. That is enough for me. *I* have every confidence in the strange friends by

whom *I* am surrounded. Can Lydia be wrong in *anything* she says, Lucy? No, she cannot. Would I go through fire and water for Lydia? Yes, I would. Is n't this much pleasanter than going through fire and water? Yes, it is. There it is in a nutshell."

"You dear boy!" said Lydia, brimming over with love for him.

"You dear girl!" said Harry, brimming over with love for her.

Then they both threw their arms round Lucy, and lavished the fondest endearments on her for having brought them together so happily, and Lucy said, "*It is nice, is n't it?*"

"I came here prepared, you see," said Harry, pursuing the theme. "If, when I entered the Lodge, I had seen all the trees walking about, dressed in the latest fashion, and all the cherries had hopped off the branches and run after me, begging me to eat them, and if your dear little pony had trotted up to me and remarked in French that it was a bright day, but that he feared we should have rain, I should have thought nothing of it at all, after reading Lydia's letter."

“We must n’t stop talking here any longer,” said Lucy. “There are things to be purchased; we have a grand dinner-party to-night, and Mrs. Peckham has nothing to cook.”

“Listen to Mama Lucy,” said Harry, merrily. “Lydia, I think I shall marry Lucy instead of you.”

“I would n’t have you, Harry,” said Lucy, in a stately way. “You are the property of another person. Come along.”

Harry was introduced to the celebrities, and immediately won their good graces by distributing three pounds of chocolate creams among them. Mme. Tussaud took charge of the remainder, saying it would not do to make her people sick. Then she and Lucy and Lydia went into the kitchen and discussed provisions with the Marchioness of Barnet, and if anything were needed to complete their happiness it was supplied by old Mr. Scarlett, who popped in and said to Harry, “How do you do, Harry?” just as if there had never been the slightest difference of opinion between them; and when Harry replied that he had never felt better in his life, and hoped Mr.

Scarlett was the same, the old gentleman said in an offhand manner: "Just so, just so. Of course you will spend the day here and take dinner with us?"

"I shall be more than delighted, sir," said Harry, who was in the seventh heaven of happiness.

It was altogether the very pleasantest scene that had ever taken place in a kitchen, and one could fancy the sly little god of love peeping out of a corner and clapping his chubby hands in approval.

Then Harry had a happy thought. He said that he could not go out and purchase the provisions alone; he must have feminine assistance.

"You see, Mme. Tussaud," he said, "it is not only quantity, but quality, that has to be seen to. I can do the quantity, but I can't do the quality. That requires a lady's judgment."

"Lucy," said Mme. Tussaud, with a sly twinkle, "you go with Harry Bower and look after the quality."

Harry and Lydia looked imploringly at Lucy, who promptly replied: "I should make

the most absurd mistakes. I don't know a duck from a goose unless they are walking about. Lydia is the proper person."

"But perhaps Lydia does n't want to go with Harry," said the old lady.

"Oh, I don't mind a bit," said Lydia, which set them all laughing.

"It can't be done," said Mme. Tussaud, "without some alteration in the articles of war. At present no one except Harry is allowed to go in and out."

Away she trotted to consult her celebrities, and had a hard task of it. Henry VIII insisted that it was he, and he alone, who should escort Lydia to the shops, and Richard III declared he could get everything that was needed at the point of the sword, and that it would make it much easier for Lydia if he went with her. Mme. Tussaud would not listen to them, and eventually returned to the kitchen and said that Harry and Lydia were to go. Off flew Lydia for her hat and mantle, and then the happy lovers went to the gate.

"Tarry not, fair maiden," said Henry VIII; "our heart will be heavy until thy re-

turn. If thou art long absent, the birds will forget how to sing."

"He does n't mean anything by it," whispered Lydia, pressing Harry's arm. "It is only his way."

CHAPTER XXI

LORIMER GRIMWEED APPEARS

IT took Lydia and Harry a long time to make their purchases, and when all the supplies had been bought, the kitchen and larder were furnished with such quantities of provisions as to cause great astonishment and admiration among the domestics. Every hook had to be brought into use, and tables, dressers, and shelves were fairly loaded. Harry, feeling that this was the turning-point in his life, made purchases in the most reckless manner, and he was not a bit annoyed but only laughed at Lydia's gentle remonstrances.

"My darling girl," he said, "Quality is your department, Quantity is mine. Just you see that everything is fresh; I will take care that they have enough."

There was no doubt about that. Never was there such a provider! Ducks and fowls by the dozen, fore quarters and legs of lamb,

ribs of beef ("Short ribs, please," Lydia had said to the butcher, and Harry thought it very wonderful of her), saddles of mutton, all the kidneys and sweetbreads the butcher could supply, great baskets of green peas, French beans, asparagus, new potatoes, tomatoes, and delicacies of every possible kind. The tradesmen were jubilant, and kept recommending things to Harry—hothouse pineapples, peaches, nectarines, grapes, and goodness knows what; and he kept nodding his head and saying, "Yes, we will take that, and that, and that," paying all the bills without asking the price.

"Oh, Harry," said Lydia, "you will be ruined!"

But, for all that, she could not help admiring her dear boy for his generosity. He purchased other things as well as provisions—air-pistols, bows, arrows, and targets, bats and shuttlecocks, skipping-ropes, humming-tops, whip-tops, balls, kites, monkeys on sticks, Japanese fireworks, rolling-hoops, marbles, ping-pong, and an "Aunt Sally"; and he hired a magic lantern and slides. He almost emptied the toy-shop. Lydia kept pulling at

his sleeve and saying, "No, no, Harry!" and he kept on ordering more things and saying, "Yes, yes, Lydia; it's all right! The more the merrier." At last she sank despairingly into a chair in a state of comic stupefaction,—which made her look prettier than ever, if anything could,—and the shop-woman brought her a glass of water.

They made half a dozen journeys back to the Lodge, followed by a regiment of stout errand-boys, carrying heavy loads, and every time they presented themselves they were received with shouts of approval by a very jolly lot of fun-loving royalties and notables.

All the toys and games they had purchased were carried to the playground, and Harry and Lucy and Lydia had as much as they could do to explain them to the celebrities. Harry fitted up a new swing, which was much enjoyed, the ladies sitting in it one after another, and the gentlemen pulling the ropes and pushing. "Higher, higher, higher!" screamed Queen Elizabeth and Mme. Sainte Amaranthe; but Mary Queen of Scots was less daring, and shrieked in terror when she was whirled high in the air. Animated as



“ The celebrities were wild for fun, and were behaving
like school-boys set free from school ”

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was the scene which had been presented to the eyes of Mr. Scarlett when he first beheld the celebrities, it was tame in comparison with what was now to be seen in the playground. The celebrities were wild for fun, and were behaving like school-boys set free from school. They flew from one pastime to another. Queen Elizabeth was sitting on a rocking-horse, and Tom Thumb was rocking her; Cromwell and Richard Cœur de Lion were whirling a skipping-rope for Mary Queen of Scots and Mme. Sainte Amaranthe and Lucy; Guy Fawkes was setting off Japanese fireworks; Henry VIII and Richard III were trundling hoops; Houqua had taken pieces of very thin paper of various colors from the folds of his robe, and was making butterflies, which he kept flying in the air with his fan; Lydia and Harry were having a game of battledore and shuttlecock; Loushkin was on guard at the front gate, and Charles II on guard at the back.

It was just when Henry VIII had run his hoop between Richard III's legs, and when the crooked monarch was picking himself up and growling and fuming, and when Harry,

roaring with laughter, was mischievously trying to trip the ladies with the skipping-rope, that Lorimer Grimweed rang the front door-bell. Being admitted, he saw nothing of these mad pranks, the playground being round the corner, at a little distance from the lawn. The only persons in view were Loushkin and Sir Rowley.

"Hello, Rowley," cried Lorimer Grimweed. "Who is this lamp-post, don'tcher-know?"

But Sir Rowley had scuttled off. Lorimer looked at the giant in amazement, but Loushkin took no notice of him.

"This is a rum go," said Lorimer Grimweed. "I say, you May-pole, who are you when you're at home?"

"When I am at home," replied Loushkin, in a thunderous voice, "I am drum-major in his Imperial Majesty's Preobrajensky Regiment of Russian Guards."

"Oh," said Lorimer Grimweed, in still greater amazement, "that's what you are?"

"That is what I am, and I give you to understand that it is against orders to speak to the man at the wheel."

"But look here, you know," remonstrated Lorimer Grimweed, with an eye to exactitude; "you're not at the wheel, you know."

Loushkin did not reply in words. He placed the fingers and thumb of one huge hand upon Lorimer Grimweed's head, and spun him round like a teetotum.

"Oh, I say, you know!" cried Lorimer Grimweed. "Here! Look out! What are you up to? Oh, grimes! Oh, oh, oh!"

This was the protest which came in breathless jerks from the spinning schemer, his teeth chattering, his eyeballs rolling wildly, and his hands stretched forth in the endeavor to catch hold of something to stop his spinning round and round. He caught hold of a human form,—the form of Miss Pennyback, —who, observing what had taken place, had rushed out to his rescue.

"Keep tight hold of me," he gasped, clinging to her both as a prop and a protection. "The world's going round—and oh, grimes! my head! Did you witness the assault? Don't deny it, don'tcherknow. You *must* have witnessed it."

"I did, sir," she answered in a sympathiz-

ing tone, "and I was deeply grieved—though I cannot say I was astonished."

"Oh, weren't you? That's a good un, that is. Not astonished? Oh, ah! What next, I wonder?"

"Goodness knows, sir," she said, as she supported him into the house. "After what has taken place this day nothing would astonish me. But, hush! Mr. Scarlett approaches!"

"Good morning, Mr. Grimweed," said the old gentleman. "Good morning, good morning, good morning." He was so nervous that he would have continued to repeat "good morning" several times had not Lorimer Grimweed stopped him.

"Hang your 'good mornings'! Here, I say—who's the man on stilts, and what's the meaning of the assault committed upon me the moment I entered the Lodge? None of your shirking, don'tcherknow. I've got a witness, and I'll have heavy damages."

"Assault! Dear me! Assault! Dear me, dear me!" The old gentleman was quite at sea. He stammered; he kept mopping his brow with a huge bandana handkerchief;

indeed, in those few seconds he did several things for which there was no reason whatever.

Lorimer Grimweed looked at him with suspicion. "There's something in the wind," thought he.

"Where's Lyddy?" he asked.

"My daughter is in the garden."

"Oh, is she? She knows what I've come for, does n't she? And *you* know what I've come for, don't you?"

"Yes, of course. The new lease. Have you brought it?"

"I've brought it, right enough. Here it is, and it will be signed when Lyddy gives me the answer I expect—not before, Mr. Scarlett, not before. I'm not going to be played upon any longer. Not if I know it, sir! Does n't think I'm good enough for her, hey? My stars! That's rich. Not good enough? Oh, ah!"

"It is n't exactly that, Mr. Grimweed," said Mr. Scarlett, and he was glad that Lorimer Grimweed interrupted him, for he did not know what he was going to say next.

"Oh, it ain't exactly that, ain't it? I say, Mr. Scarlett, there's a sort of change in you

that I don't find agreeable. If you're playing any of your tricks on me, look out, that's all I've got to say—look out. Hello!"—as, greatly to Mr. Scarlett's relief, Mme. Tussaud sailed into the room—"here's another of 'em. Who are *you* when you're at home?" This was a favorite form of inquiry with him; he considered it smart and cutting.

"I am a friend of the family," replied the old lady, "when I'm at home, and when I'm out."

"Oh, are you? The family have a lot of new friends I did n't know anything about. You look as if you'd just come out of the Ark," said Lorimer Grimweed, with a grin. "Grimes! what a bonnet! How's Noah and all the little uns? But here, stop a minute—I've seen you before somewhere. By Jove, yes! But, no, it can't be!"

"My name is Mme. Tussaud. I should think you *have* seen me before."

"Not the wax un?" exclaimed Lorimer Grimweed, lost in astonishment.

"Do I look like 'the wax un'? I'm the original." Miss Pennyback was about to make a remark when Mme. Tussaud said, "We can

dispense with your presence, Miss Pennyback. Oblige me by retiring. Remember!"

For a moment Miss Pennyback thought of resisting. She recognized a possible ally in Lorimer Grimweed, and she would have dearly loved to checkmate her enemy; but when Mme. Tussaud advanced toward her, with the magic cane extended, she fled.

"What is this?" said Mme. Tussaud, taking up a copy of the lease which Lorimer Grimweed had put on the table.

"Here, I say, just you drop that! It belongs to me, don'tcherknow! Just you hand it over," said Grimweed.

"I perceive that it's a new lease of Marybud Lodge," said Mme. Tussaud, paying no heed to his request. "Are you going to sign it? I will be a witness."

"Wait till you're asked, old lady. The lease will be signed when the conditions are fulfilled."

"Is Miss Lydia one of the conditions?"

"Yes, she is, if you want to know. Here, I say, Mr. Scarlett, what's the meaning of all this? I'm not the man to stand any one's impudence, you know."

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“ My dear Mr. Grimweed,” said Mme. Tus-saud, very sweetly, “ why put yourself out? You and I and the ladies and gentlemen who have accompanied me are going to be the best of friends. I will take care of the document.”

“ It is n't worth the paper it 's written on till it 's signed,” said Lorimer Grimweed.

“ Of course it is not.”

“ I say, how does it happen you know my name? ”

“ How does it happen I know a great many things? ”

“ And what do you mean by the ladies and gentlemen who have accompanied you? ”

“ You will soon find out,” said Mme. Tus-saud. “ Come and see.”

CHAPTER XXII

A PAIR OF ARCH-CONSPIRATORS

EVIDENTLY Lorimer Grimweed was puzzled and perplexed. The state of affairs in Marybud Lodge was mysterious—very mysterious. He looked at Mme. Tussaud, and she smiled knowingly at him. Smiles are cheap. He smiled back at her. He could n't lose anything by that. He heard voices outside shouting and laughing; one voice in particular almost drowning the rest, a jovial voice, at that moment exclaiming, "Go to, thou saucy baggage!" and then fresh peals of laughter.

As Lorimer Grimweed walked with Mme. Tussaud to the playground, he said to himself: "Keep cool, keep cool. Don't let anything stagger you. Whatever it is that 's going on, you may make something out of it."

The celebrities were indeed having what Tom Thumb called "a high old time." He

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and Queen Elizabeth were watching a game of ping-pong which Richard Cœur de Lion and Charles II were playing on a table that



“ Mme. Tussaud smiled knowingly at him ”

had been brought out for the purpose; Cromwell was shooting arrows into a target; Richard III was playing with a monkey on a stick; and Houqua the tea merchant was making

a prodigiously long tail for a kite decorated with dragons cut in yellow paper, which he intended to fly for the amusement of the ladies; and all were eating chocolate creams, with which Lucy, going smilingly from one to another, kept them liberally supplied. Presently the principal interest became centered in an Aunt Sally which Harry Bower had fixed in the ground, and in which rollicking pastime he was giving instruction. Henry VIII was particularly eager about it.

“A tourney—a tourney!” he cried. “We challenge the boldest knight to a tilt of sticks ’gainst the nose of Mme. ma tante Sallie.”

“That knight am I,” exclaimed Richard III, before any one else could speak, “unless thou art afeard.”

“Afeard!” cried Henry. “The pale ghost Fear was ne’er yet seen on Henry’s brow! Harry of the Bower, count out the sticks, and see that the pipe is firmly fixed ’twixt Mme. Sallie’s lips. Afeard! Wert thou our vassal, Richard, the lowest dungeon in our castle would be thy bed; but as it is, thy challenge is accepted. Heralds, proclaim; let the trumpets sound.”

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By this time Harry Bower had completed the arrangements for the match. The pipe



“ ‘ A tourney—a tourney!’ he cried ”

was fixed in Aunt Sally’s mouth; in her funny frilled cap she seemed to be grinning at the

company and to be saying, "Come on, my bucks; I 'm ready for you."

Nettled as he was at the presence of his rival, Lorimer Grimweed took no notice of Harry. He offered his flabby hand to Lydia.

"How do you do, Miss Lyddy?"

"How do you do, Mr. Grimweed?" said Lydia, politely, but without much cordiality.

"Remember, Harry," said Mary Queen of Scots to Henry VIII, "bright eyes behold thy deeds."

"By St. Jude!" he said, poisoning a stick in his hand, "we will make dust of Mme. ma tante Sallie's pipe."

Vain boast! He threw three sticks, and Aunt Sally still grinned at him, her pipe unbroken in her mouth. Richard III missed with his first and second sticks, but with his third smashed the pipe.

"Ha, ha, Henry!" he cried, with a boastful laugh. "We will show thee!"

"One to his Majesty Richard III," said Mme. Tussaud.

Henry VIII threw three more sticks, and, roaring with laughter, sent the pipe flying with his third; but Richard III smashed two

pipes to his one, and was proclaimed the victor.

"Any more, Hal?" asked Richard III, triumphantly.

"No more, cousin. Mme. ma tante Sallie plays us false. We have had enough of the jade."

He struck her a vigorous whack across the face with a stick, and her frilled cap fell on one side of her head. She looked a very battered and dilapidated old woman.

Lorimer Grimweed cast his eyes around, and they met those of Mme. Tussaud. The few words he had had with her had not impressed him unfavorably. He had spoken to her rudely, and she had answered him amiably. Perhaps he could bamboozle the old lady. Anyhow, it would do him no harm to try to make a friend of her.

"Look here," he said, beckoning her aside. "What is all this about? I 'd like to know, you know."

"What do you want to know, 'you know'?" asked Mme. Tussaud.

"Whether all this is real—genuine, you know."



“ Richard III missed with his first and second sticks, but with
his third smashed the pipe ”



“Oh, it ’s real enough,” said Mme. Tus-saud. “Does not Shakspere say that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy?”

“Yes, he does; and he knew a lot, did n’t he? I tell you, Shakspere was a wise old chap, now was n’t he?”

“Indeed he was. There never was a poet so wise and far-seeing. He foresaw the future; he foretold what would take place centuries after he wrote his wonderful plays. When that tricky imp Puck said that he would put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes, there was no electric telegraph, no telephone, no Atlantic cable; and the girdle *has* been put round the earth, and under the sea, and we can speak to our friends in America, and they to their friends in England, just as though we and they were all living in one house—not to mention speaking across the water without any wires at all. If that is true, Mr. Grimweed,—which it is,—why should not this be true?”

“Of course, of course,” he said eagerly. “And seeing ’s believing, is n’t it? (I wonder if Shakspere said that!) But, my dear

woman, I am not asleep—I am awake. Oh, you 've no idea how wide awake I am! I say—what a magnificent dress Queen Elizabeth has on—a magnificent dress!”

“I should think she has,” said Mme. Tussaud. “It cost enough.”

“She must have paid no end of money for it.” Mme. Tussaud smiled. “And, grimes! look at her jewels! Why, that sixteenth-century fan she is waving is worth a little fortune. Should n’t I like to get hold of it! Wonder what she wants for it? D’ you think she ’d sell it? I ’m a judge of those things, I am. You can’t take *me* in, so you ’d better not try.”

“I shall not try. You ’re fond of curious things?”

“Rather!”

“Would you like to see something very, *very* curious?”

“Is there anything to pay?”

“No, not a penny; it is quite free.”

“I ’m your man, then. Trust me for never missing a chance. If I can get something for nothing, I get it.”

“You *are* a clever one,” said Mme. Tussaud.

"I rather flatter myself that I am," said Lorimer Grimweed, with a knowing look.

"Come along, then," said Mme. Tussaud, leading the way to the school-room. "Which of all those grand people do you like best?"

"Oh, I like that Richard III," he replied, with enthusiasm. "There 's something so kindly and noble about him."

"You have found that out, have you?"

"Could n't help finding it out. It is n't much that escapes *me*, you must know. I say—Miss Lyddy is a fine girl, is n't she?"

"She is a beautiful girl."

"Thank you, oh, thank you! We shall make a splendid couple. It 's no use her trying to wriggle out of it. I 've got old Scarlett under my thumb—under my thumb."

He sniggered and chuckled and rubbed his hands, and did not notice the look of strong aversion which Mme. Tussaud cast at him. By this time they had arrived at the school-room in which the gentlemen celebrities had slept. Mme. Tussaud handed Lorimer Grimweed a key.

"It is the key of that closet," she said. "Please unlock it."

Burning with curiosity, he put the key in the lock. What did the closet contain? Jewels, treasures, perhaps, which she wished him to buy? If so, he would drive a sharp bargain. The idea that he would not be able to outwit this little old woman in a poke-bonnet made him laugh.

He turned the key slowly. Something was pushing against the door, something heavy. In his impatience, Lorimer Grimweed pulled the door wide open—and the next moment he was rolling on the floor, with the inanimate form of the Headsman on top of him.

“Here, I say!” he screamed, “what are you up to, don’tcherknow? Oh, grimes! I’m being smothered. Take him off—take him off!”

Choking with laughter, Mme. Tussaud touched the Headsman with her magic cane, and he rose majestically to his feet and picked up his ax.

Lorimer Grimweed raised himself into a sitting posture, and with wild eyes stared at the effigy. The gruesome appearance of the masked man struck terror to his soul.



“In his impatience, Lorimer Grimweed pulled the door wide open—and the next moment he was rolling on the floor”



“It is only a person I locked up in the cupboard for misbehavior,” said Mme. Tussaud.

“Why does he—why does he—carry an ax?” asked Lorimer Grimweed, in a trembling voice. “He—he looks like an executioner.”

“He *is* an executioner. I bring him with me to keep people in order.”

“Oh, do you!” said Lorimer Grimweed, scrambling hastily to his feet. “Perhaps I am in the way, and I would n’t wish to be that, you know. If you’ll excuse me, I’ll join the ladies and gentlemen on the lawn.”

So saying, he hurried away. Never in his life had he run so fast.

While this scene was being enacted, every one else in the house and grounds was playing or working most zealously. Lucy and Lydia and Harry Bower and Tom Thumb cut oceans of flowers, which were carried into the house, and tastefully arranged by the maids and Miss Pennyback. All the best china and glass had been brought out, all the best table-cloths and serviettes, all the best cutlery, and all the silver. It would have done

your heart good to see the kitchen, where the Marchioness of Barnet and Polly and Maria were bristling with enthusiasm. Belinda took things more calmly; nothing surprised her. Sir Rowley and Flip of the Odd were the busiest of the busy, ordered about here, there, and everywhere by everybody, and obeying with cheerful alacrity. Mr. Scarlett got out his best wine, and bustled up and down in great good humor; and Lucy and Lydia were in a perfect glow of anticipation. But once, for a moment only, Lydia's spirits drooped, it must be confessed, and she said confidentially to Lucy:

"I seem to be happy, Lucy dear, and so do you; but I don't know if we ought to be—for, oh, Lucy! how is it all going to end?"

"In wedding bells, you darling," answered Lucy, throwing her arms round Lydia's neck, "in wedding bells! Listen! Don't you hear them? Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong!"

"You dear, you darling!" said Lydia.

CHAPTER XXIII

WHAT LONDON THOUGHT OF IT

WHILE Marybud Lodge was in a ferment at these extraordinary proceedings, all London was in a ferment of another kind. No sooner were the gates of the exhibition opened than the newspapers came out with great head-lines in the very boldest type:

EXTRAORDINARY DISCOVERY

IN

MME. TUSSAUD'S

WORLD-RENOWNED EXHIBITION!!

THE MOST THRILLING AND AMAZING
MYSTERY ON RECORD!!!

MME. TUSSAUD VANISHED!

HER CELEBRITIES GONE!!

WHAT HAS BECOME OF THEM?

HUMAN BEINGS IN THE PLACE OF WAX!!!

ARE THEY ALIVE, OR NOT?

Throughout the whole of the day news-boys were tearing about the streets like mad, screaming at the top of their voices:

“Speshul! Speshul! The great Baker Street mystery! Disappearance of 'Enery the Heighth! 'Orrible discoveries! Queen Elizabeth missing! Latest edition, with all the hastounding news! Mysterious escape of Mary Queen of Scots! The great Baker Street mystery! Speshul! Speshul!”

Every newspaper in London issued a fresh edition every half-hour or so, and the papers could not be printed fast enough, so delirious was the demand for them. North, south, east, and west, nothing else was spoken or thought of but the amazing, the astounding, the bewildering Baker Street mystery. Business on the Stock Exchange was suspended; nobody went to the races; a holiday was given to all the school-children; tradesmen might as well have shut up their shops; servants neglected their household work, and their mistresses could not remain in the house. Everybody asked everybody else, What has become of the missing celebrities? Where are they? How did they get out? How did

the others get in? What will be the ultimate fate of the human beings now occupying the places of the missing wax effigies in Mme. Tussaud's famous exhibition? And no one who asked the questions had the slightest expectation of receiving a satisfactory reply. It was, indeed, like a Lord Mayor's day in London. From every nook and corner in the metropolis people were wending their way to Baker Street station, and so great was the crush between the Marble Arch and Regent's Park that large squads of police were appointed to regulate the traffic and preserve order.

As for the exhibition itself, it was literally besieged, and, as Mme. Tussaud had predicted, all the previous records of attendances were thrown completely in the shade. Every person connected with the great show was interviewed again and again, those most in request being the night-watchmen and the firemen. They positively declared that not a soul except themselves had been in the place from the moment of its closing at night to the moment of its opening in the morning; that nothing had been removed from the building,

and nothing conveyed into it, during those hours; that they had not slept a wink the whole of the night, and had not for a single moment relaxed their vigilance. To these statements they unflinchingly adhered, and, despite the facts that stared them in the face, no arguments could shake them. They were respectable, steady men, and were as much confounded by what had taken place as all London was.

But if they could throw no light upon it, who could? People were literally stupefied. The newspapers were unanimous in declaring that the astounding Baker Street mystery was without parallel in the annals of journalism, and the public hung with breathless interest upon the smallest detail that had the remotest connection with it. The ordinary detective gazed open-mouthed at the spectacle; the scientific mind was bewildered.

The excitement spread into the most exclusive quarters, and the thoroughfares leading to Mme. Tussaud's were wedged with fashionable carriages. In the course of the afternoon way was made for the Lord Mayor,

who, in his state carriage and robes, and followed by the sheriffs and aldermen in *their* state carriages and robes, paid a visit to the exhibition; and an hour later it was with the greatest difficulty that the Prince and Princess of Wales and other members of the royal family could reach the doors.

Perhaps the strangest feature in the mystery was the condition of the human beings who had been petrified, so to speak, by Mme. Tussaud's magic cane, and who now stood, stiff and motionless and bereft of sense, for all the world to gaze upon.

The question to be decided was, Were they alive or dead? If they were dead there had been fourteen ruthless murders committed. Here was work for the criminal lawyers and the learned judges. Here was work for Scotland Yard. Here was fresh sensation for the newspapers.

The most eminent medical men were called in and were allowed to make their tests. Then they held a consultation. Then they made more tests. Then they held another consultation. Then they issued a bulletin, which was

thus editorially commented upon in one of the daily papers:

It will be a satisfaction to the relatives of the human beings now standing transfixed in Mme. Tussaud's exhibition to learn that a council of the most eminent physicians and scientists in the country has come to the conclusion that those persons are *not defunct*. So far as can be ascertained at present, it is stated to be a case of suspended animation, distinguished by features so peculiar that it is regarded as the strangest case in the records of medical science. Further consultations will be held and further bulletins issued from time to time.

Later editions of the papers stated that the electric current had been applied to the rigid figures, but that the results obtained could only be described as ludicrous.

The next supremely interesting question was, How long would these human beings remain in their helpless state? If they were incapable of partaking of food,—as was declared to be the case,—what period of time would elapse before life departed from their bodies? To this they replied, Time will show, but it could not be expected that any one would be satisfied with such an answer.

Other complications followed. The relatives of the unfortunate persons demanded that the figures should be given up to them. The proprietors of the exhibition refused, and the eminent medical men declared it would not be safe to move the figures. They shook their heads and said they would not answer for the consequences. And when the relatives said, "But what business is it of yours?" they continued to shake their heads, and replied, "Oh, but you should n't talk like that!"

The relatives were furious. Off they rushed to the lawyers, who took down hundreds of law-books, and for days they hunted through them for precedents. Then they wrote hundreds of tiresome lawyers' letters, at six shillings and eightpence each, commencing, "We are instructed by our clients, So-and-so and So-and-so, to demand," etc.

Then armies of bill-posters went all through London and posted on the walls immense bills offering rewards for the return of the missing celebrities. And everybody who read these bills rushed off to the exhibition and paid shillings at the doors. And at



“ Armies of bill-posters went all through London and posted
on the walls immense bills offering rewards
for the return of the celebrities ”

all the railway stations and all the ports, regiments of detectives were on the watch, so that the celebrities should not escape from the kingdom either by land or by water.

The amounts of the rewards offered varied considerably: £100 each for Queen Elizabeth, Henry VIII, Richard I, Richard III, Charles II, and Mary Queen of Scots; £60 each for Cromwell and Loushkin; £50 each for Guy Fawkes, Tom Thumb, and Mme. Sainte Amaranthe; £25 for Houqua, the Chinaman; £15 for the Executioner; and £250 for Mme. Tussaud.

“Aha!” said Mme. Tussaud to herself, when she ran her eye over this scale of rewards. “The great British public knows my value. It pays me proper respect.”

In these bills, which were printed in red, yellow, and black, with the royal coat of arms at the top, special announcement was made that the rewards were only for the *bodies* of the missing celebrities, their clothing, accoutrements, decorations, and jewels being far too valuable for appraisal; and it was declared that any person or persons found in possession of any of these adornments would

be prosecuted with the utmost rigor of the law.

The offer of the rewards was printed in later editions of the newspapers, which Harry Bower went out from time to time to obtain, and much of what was printed was imparted by Mme. Tussaud to her celebrities. It occasioned a good deal of jealousy. Mme. Sainte Amaranthe said she did n't care a bit that she was rated lower than Mary Queen of Scots—but it was evident she did; and Cromwell wanted to know why he was valued at £40 less than the tyrant kings.

The full particulars of the unprecedented excitement created by the mystery, not only in England, but in all parts of the world, may be found in a special account of the affair written by an eminent literary gentleman, and illustrated by a celebrated artist. An *édition de luxe*, published at a guinea (net), and limited to 150,000 copies, was sold out on the day of publication, and now commands high prices. If any of the readers of this story should succeed in obtaining a copy of this book they may indeed consider themselves very lucky.

CHAPTER XXIV

HOW THE CELEBRITIES WERE ENTERTAINED IN THE EVENING

“**B**Y St. Jude!” exclaimed Henry VIII, as he entered the banqueting-hall with Queen Elizabeth on his arm. “This Mary-bud Lodge of thine, fair Lucy, is a very garden of flowers, and thou and thy sister the sweetest of them all. In good sooth, thou hast but to smile upon a bud, and it bursts into bloom. And this table, spread for our entertainment—ha, ha! and this menu, it likes us well.”

In truth, a prettier dinner-table was never seen, with its glittering glass and china, its snow-white cloths and shining silver, and its low banks of flowers embedded in moss. The doors and walls were festooned, and so skilful was the arrangement that the flowers seemed to be growing where they were set. The celebrities expressed their admiration in

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various ways, and Queen Elizabeth murmured:

“ ‘ Away before me to sweet beds of flowers,
Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with
bowers.’ ”

Thou hast done well, child.”

“ I am glad you are pleased,” said Lucy,
“ but you must give the praise to Lydia.”

“ No, no,” said Lydia. “ To Lucy.”

“ ’T is a sweet contention,” said Queen Elizabeth, smiling upon the girls, but the smile died away in a frown. “ We had a sister who harbored not toward us sentiments so loving. But this is not the time for gloomy thought. The hour is

‘ Full of joy and mirth.

Joy, gentle friends! Joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!’ ”

“ What beautiful things you say, dear queen!” said Lucy.

“ For the which, child, thank that Swan of Avon who left to his dear land a heritage of divinest song. What is here, forsooth? A posy? ”

She placed it at her breast, and her example was followed by all the guests, by the side of whose napkins lay delicate posies of fern and flower.

The Headsman did not sit at the table. He was doing duty outside, pacing the ground between the two entrances to the Lodge, and had been promised a table to himself in another apartment later in the evening.

As for the dinner, the Marchioness of Barnet had done wonders. In consultation with Mme. Tussaud she had provided an astonishing number of choice dishes; and the menu prepared for the occasion deserves to be treasured as a memento. If there are any grammatical errors or wrong spelling in it Miss Pennyback is responsible for them, for to her was intrusted the task of writing them out in a fair, round hand. Here it is:

MENU.

Potages.

Potage à la Bonne Reine Bess.

Puree à la Mme. Sainte Amaranthe.

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Poissons.

Saumon à la Reine Mary des Ecossais. Sauce
Tartare à la Guy Fawkes.
Truite à la Mme. Tussaud.
Filets de Sole à la Charles II.

Entrées.

Riz de Veau à la Houqua.
Chaufroid de Cotelettes de Mouton à la Richard III.

Relevés.

Poulardes à la Richard Cœur de Lion.
Quartier d'Agneau à la Roi gai Henry VIII.
Pommes de terre à la M. Scarlett.

Rôts.

Canetons à la Tom de la Pouce.
Pintades à la M. Bower.
Salade à l'Oliver Cromwell.

Entremets.

Asperges à la Loushkin.
Célestines d'Abricots à la Chère Petite Lucy.
Demoiselles d'Honneur à la Belle Lydia.
Café noir à l'Executioner.

This is as far as Miss Pennyback got; she did not venture upon the details of an elaborate dessert, leaving these and certain other

delicacies as surprises for the guests. The wines were left to speak for themselves, which they were well able to do.

Sir Rowley, Flip of the Odd, and the maids, with shining faces and in their Sunday clothes, waited at table, and Henry VIII was so pleased with the menu that he remarked, with a joyous glance at Queen Elizabeth:

“By our Lady, we have never been more bountifully served!”

Belinda was leaving the room with her arms full when the remark was made, and there came to the ears of the guests a sudden crash of crockery, which caused Lucy to exclaim, “Oh, dear!” but her papa, like the good host he was, took no notice of it. Mirth and joy prevailed in the hearts of all except Richard III, whose nature was too sinister to join in the hilarity, and Lorimer Grimweed, who, despite that he had partaken of every course, was not quite easy in his mind respecting Mme. Tussaud. One toast only was proposed. Queen Elizabeth rapped upon the table, and all eyes were turned upon her. She raised her glass.

“To our dear Lucy and Lydia, sweet health and fair desires.”

The enthusiasm was immense. Lucy's face was rosy-red, and it grew rosier-redder when she was called upon to respond to the toast. But to her great relief, Lydia at that moment rose to her feet, and bowing gracefully to the assembled company, looked around the table with a beaming smile, waited until the cheering had ceased, and then simply said:

"Thank you!"

All the glasses on the table rang out in musical applause, and Lucy's papa, with tears of joy shining in his eyes, said under his breath, "Bless the dear girl! Bless *both* my dear girls!"

"Grimes! what a dinner I 've had!" thought Lorimer Grimweed. "It must have cost old Scarlett a little fortune."

Mme. Tussaud gave the signal to rise from the table.

"We will go all together to the drawing-room," she said, "where Harry Bower has a little entertainment for us."

They did not dare to dispute the old lady's commands, so they one and all trooped into the pretty drawing-room, wondering on the way what kind of amusement Harry Bower



Lydia responding to the toast



had in store for them. The white sheet he had hung at one end of the room stimulated their curiosity as they seated themselves in the chairs which had been placed for them and began to chatter as ordinary people do in a theater before the performances begin. Their chatter ceased when the room was darkened, and Lydia, who had seated herself at the piano, began to play soft music. Then there flashed before the astonished eyes of the celebrities the pictures of a magic lantern. Exclamations of wonder and delight escaped their lips.

“By our Lady!” exclaimed Henry VIII.
 “Harry of the Bower is a magician.”

Great was the enthusiasm of Queen Elizabeth when upon the curtain there suddenly appeared the figure of Shakspeare, which she vowed was a faithful presentment of her dear poet, “in his habit as he lived”; and when this was followed by a picture of Hermione garbed as a statue, she murmured:

“‘Oh, thus she stood,
 Even with such life of majesty (warm life,
 As now it coldly stands), when first I woo’d her!’”

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Still greater was her enthusiasm when dainty Ariel appeared, and Lydia sang, "Where the bee sucks, there suck I."

"'T is the old time come o'er again," murmured the fond queen.¹

Harry Bower had provided a splendid collection of slides, and he had selected these especially for Queen Bess. Artful young man! With the majority of the company the most popular were the dissolving views, winter melting into spring, spring into summer, summer into autumn, autumn into winter with the snow falling, and the moving pictures, conjurers throwing balls, girls skipping, the flower in the flower-pot changing to a Turk's head, and the clown jumping through a hoop. Great stamping of feet, clapping of hands, and amazed exclamations of delight greeted each fresh tableau.

Harry Bower wound up his entertainment with the pictures which described the death and burial of poor Cock Robin, and to hear

¹ Note for scholarly young readers (others may skip it). Her Majesty's allusions to and quotations from "The Winter's Tale" and "The Tempest" will settle the dispute as to the dates of the production of these plays—for surely in matters of importance occurring during her reign Queen Elizabeth is a final authority.



“ ‘ London Bridge is Falling Down ’ ”

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the celebrities joining in the chorus to each verse was something to be remembered:

“ All the birds in the air fell a-sighing and a-sobbing
When they heard the bell toll for poor Cock
Robin.”

It was most affecting; and, indeed, several of the celebrities wore expressions of grief.

When the last chorus was sung and Cock Robin comfortably buried, the lights were turned up and they had games—“ London Bridge is Falling Down,” “ Nuts in May,” “ Hunt the Slipper,” “ Musical Chairs,” and others with which they were highly diverted. Not the least popular were the kissing games, in which Henry VIII came out in great force.

“ Oh, dear,” thought Lucy, when he caught her in his arms, “ I ’ve been kissed by a king! But how rough they are!”

Then followed songs. Queen Elizabeth sang a love ditty, Henry VIII a hunting song, and Tom Thumb stood on a chair and gave them “ Yankee Doodle.” Of course Lucy and Lydia were called upon, and they sang

very sweetly. Lydia's song was quite new, and this is how it ran:

“Sweet Nature, good-morrow;
Good-morrow, fair dame!
The birds are awak'ning
And praising thy name,
The east is aflame.

“The green earth lies smiling,
Aroused from repose.
How gentle, how coaxing
The morning wind blows!
'T is courting the rose.

“Young life is awakened,
And ceases to dream.
See how the light dances
On yon silver stream,
With sunshine agleam.

“Oh, life, of thy gladness
And joy I will borrow!
Laugh, laugh, all ye woodlands,
And chase away sorrow.
Sweet Nature, good-morrow! ”

CHAPTER XXV

THE GOOD-BY AT THE DOOR

THE clock struck ten, and Lorimer Grimweed for the last hour had been shifting uneasily in his chair. All this nonsense of singing and games had greatly annoyed him.

"Lucy dear," said Mme. Tussaud, "it is time for you and Lydia and your papa to get to bed."

"But what will *you* do?" asked Lucy. "It must be very uncomfortable sleeping in those horrid school-rooms. Of course we have n't beds enough for all of you, but you and the ladies can sleep with Lydia and me, and we have got the spare room ready."

"We shall not need it, Lucy. Do as I tell you, and leave the rest to me. Do you all lock your doors when you retire?"

"No," answered Lucy, wondering at the question.

"Very good. Get you to bed."

Lucy did not hesitate. "Papa dear," she said, "you are so sleepy that you can hardly keep your eyes open. We are all going to bed."

"But our friends here—" he stammered.

"Will take care of themselves," said Mme. Tussaud. "We can do that, I think. We were not born yesterday."

There was no disputing that. Ah, how many thousands upon thousands of yesterdays had passed away since they first opened their eyes upon the world!

"Such a pleasant evening!" said Mme. Tussaud, as she wished her host good night.

And, "Such a pleasant evening!" murmured the celebrities, as they did the same. "Thank you *so much*!"

"Come along, papa," said Lucy, handing him a chamber candlestick.

"Before you are twenty-four hours older," whispered Mme. Tussaud to him, "you shall have the new lease of Marybud Lodge, duly signed and sealed."

Lucy looked around upon the celebrities. "Oh, what a wonderful day!" she thought. "What a wonderful, wonderful day!"

Modestly and gracefully she and Lydia bade good night to their friends.

“Good night, fair Lydia,” said Queen Elizabeth. “‘Thy love ne’er alter till thy sweet life end.’ Good night, dear Lucy. ‘Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast.’ Dost truly love me, child?”

“Truly, truly! With all my heart, dear queen!”

Elizabeth stooped and touched Lucy’s cheek with her lips. The sweetest look of loving thanks shone in Lucy’s eyes as she curtsied to the great queen.

Mme. Tussaud accompanied the sisters out into the passage.

“Shall we see you early to-morrow morning, dear Mme. Tussaud?” asked Lucy.

“No one knows what to-morrow will bring forth,” answered the old lady. “Should I not be here, you will know where to find me. Well, upon my word, here is Harry Bower! Now, pray tell me, what does *he* want? A good-by at the door?”

With a roguish smile she turned her back upon the lovers.

It was rather singular, but certainly appro-

priate, that Queen Elizabeth's voice should be heard from within the room, saying:

“ ‘ Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet
sorrow

That I could say good night till it be morrow.’ ”

“ There, there,” said Mme. Tussaud, confronting the blushing Lydia and the happy young man, “ do you hear what her Majesty is saying? Away with you, Harry Bower.” She drove him gently back into the room, and, tenderly embracing the girls, promised that their horror, Lorimer Grimweed, should not trouble them much longer.

“ When Lydia and Harry are married,” she said, “ I should like to be at the wedding, but I fear it will be impossible. Do not forget me, children.”

“ Do you think we could if we tried? ” they said, throwing their arms round her neck. “ And do you think we are going to try? ”

She watched them till they were out of sight. They blew kisses to her as they went.

CHAPTER XXVI

HOW MME. TUSSAUD DEALT WITH MISS
LUCINDA PENNYBACK AND MR.
LORIMER GRIMWEED

IT was while the good nights were being exchanged that Miss Pennyback adopted a bold course of action. She had been greatly excited by the remarkable incidents of this remarkable day, and so intense was her curiosity and her desire to witness what else might transpire that she squeezed herself into the smallest possible space, and kept in the background, hoping thereby to escape the eye of Mme. Tussaud; and taking advantage of a favorable opportunity, she slyly retreated behind a conveniently placed screen, where she remained unseen and, as she believed, unnoticed. But it was not alone her curiosity to witness the further proceedings of the celebrities that induced her to take this step. There was another reason, which she deemed

of the greatest possible consequence, and which had thrown her into a state of delightful agitation. Earlier in the evening Lorimer Grimweed, when he and she thought no one was observing them, had whispered into her ear the following soul-stirring words:

“I should like to speak to you privately before I leave Marybud Lodge to-night. I have something of the utmost importance to say to you.”

Now what did this mysteriously confidential remark imply? This gallant young man—she thought of him as a young man, though he was nearer fifty than forty—had something of the utmost importance to say to her! And he had not made the remark aloud in an offhand manner, but had whispered it, actually whispered it, mind you, with his lips so close, oh, so very close to her ear! What *could* this imply? Was it possible that she had supplanted Miss Lydia in his affections? Was it possible that he intended that *she* should be the future Mrs. Grimweed instead of Miss Lydia? As she crouched (in rather an uncomfortable attitude, but what did that matter?) behind the screen she dwelt with

rapture upon the delightful prospect. "Be still, my fluttering heart!" she whispered to herself. "Oh, my Lorimer—my noble, peerless Lorimer!"

But nothing escaped the watchful eye of Mme. Tussaud. She had seen Lorimer Grimweed whisper into Miss Pennyback's ear, she had seen that lady's sly retreat to a place of concealment. Mme. Tussaud was quite content; she even smiled. The real business of her visit and that of her celebrities had yet to be accomplished. Lydia must be released from the odious attentions of Lorimer Grimweed, and the new lease of Marybud Lodge must be signed; and in order to achieve these victories it was her intention to make Lorimer Grimweed sensible of the consequences if he dared to defy her. She had no doubt of her success, for who could resist the power of her magic cane?

When, therefore, she returned to the room she was pleased to observe that Miss Pennyback was still behind the screen, and she immediately prepared for action. Rapping smartly upon the table to stop the chattering of her celebrities, she thus addressed them:

“ My celebrities, in the pleasures and enjoyments of the day we have said nothing of the task to perform which we journeyed to this delightful retreat where our dear Lucy and Lydia reside with their papa. Before we started I informed you that we were going into the country upon an affair of chivalry. We came here to rescue a fair damsel in distress, a mission which the chivalrous heart of England has ever gladly undertaken. You have not, I hope, forgotten my words.”

“ Nothing that falls from thy lips, Mme. la Tussaud,” replied Henry VIII, with kingly dignity, “ is likely to be forgotten by the Majesty of England. By the holy rood, what we came hither to perform, that we *will* perform. Our knightly word was given. Who breaketh his knightly word is false to his order, and shall himself be broken and dishonored. When the great King Alfred invested William of Malmesbury with a purple garment set with gems, and a Saxon sword with a golden sheath, it was no idle ceremony he performed. He bade his grandson remember that knight-hood and chivalry were one, and that he must never be deaf to the plaint of a demoiselle.”

"Thus spoke Segur, our garter king of arms," said Queen Elizabeth. "In the blood of knightly men run fealty, modesty, courtesy, self-denial, and valor. We wait to hear what further thou hast to say, madame."

"An if any here oppose thee we will deal with him," said Henry VIII.

"Our royal cousins speak our thoughts," said Richard Cœur de Lion. "We are of one mind."

He looked around, and all the celebrities nodded their heads and said: "We are of one mind."

"'T is well," said Henry VIII. "Proceed, Mme. la Tussaud."

"What is all the fuss about?" thought Lorimer Grimweed. "What do they mean by their damsel in distress?"

And Miss Pennyback, hidden behind the screen, inwardly congratulated herself upon her cleverness, and eagerly awaited what was to follow.

"We trust, madame," said Richard Cœur de Lion, "that the fair damsel you refer to is not that sweet child, Mlle. Lucy."

Mme. Tussaud did not reply, but held up her hand.

"Pardon, Richard, a moment," she said. "Assembled here as we are in solemn council, we must have no interlopers. Do you all agree with me, celebrities?"

"We all agree," they answered, as with one voice.

"No eavesdroppers or spies," said Mme. Tussaud.

"Eavesdroppers and spies!" roared Henry VIII. "An we catch any we will make short work of them."

Guy Fawkes rubbed his hands; Richard III's eyes gleamed; the Headsman raised his ax.

"Restrain yourselves, my celebrities," said Mme. Tussaud. "Our only desire is that justice shall be done."

As before they answered, "Justice shall be done."

Then Mme. Tussaud, in a loud voice, said:

"Miss Pennyback, come forth."

The screen trembled, and all their eyes were turned toward it, none with greater eagerness than those of Richard III and the Headsman.

"Do not give me occasion to repeat the lesson I gave you this morning," said Mme.

Tussaud, sternly. "It is n't a bit of use hiding behind that screen. Lucinda Pennyback, come forth."

With tottering steps, and with a face into which she vainly strove to throw a brave expression, Miss Pennyback presented herself.

"Ha, ha!" cried Richard III. "A spy upon our royal council! We pronounce sentence! Executioner, to thy work!"

"Mr. Grimweed—Lorimer—protect me!" screamed Miss Pennyback, running toward him. At the same moment, the Headsman stepped nimbly forward, and with a sweep of his ax was about to strike when Mme. Tussaud touched both him and Richard III with her magic wand, and they became transfixed. Lorimer Grimweed, who showed no disposition to protect Miss Pennyback, who by this time had managed to get between him and the wall, gazed at them in fear and amazement. Their glaring eyes and motionless attitude filled him with terror, and he had what is called "the creeps" all over him.

"We can do without violence," said Mme. Tussaud. "As you perceive, Mr. Grimweed, we have at our command other means as ef-

fectual. I hold a power which none dare brave, and neither noble nor commoner shall defy my commands with impunity."

"Might I suggest the torture-chamber, madame?" said Guy Fawkes. "I have had some experience."

"No, nor that. I can manage the lady alone. Miss Pennyback, you heard me speak of spies and interlopers. In the business we have to do your presence is not needed. Lucinda Pennyback, go to bed!"

But Miss Pennyback, relieved from the terror inspired by the sentence pronounced by Richard III, and by Mme. Tussaud's statement that she would have no violence, and not having observed Lorimer Grimweed's disregard of her appeal for protection or his own frightened aspect, mustered sufficient courage to say in faltering accents:

"I am not accustomed to be ordered to bed, madame."

"Whether you are or not, you will obey. You will not? Very good."

Once again the magic cane was used, and Miss Pennyback, with arms outstretched, was fixed and motionless.

"Oh, grimes!" groaned Lorimer Grimweed. "This is awful! This is something awful!"

"You made the remark to me to-day, Mr. Grimweed," said Mme. Tussaud, "that seeing 's believing. Speak to her, and satisfy yourself that she has no more sense or feeling in her than a block of wood."

"I 'd r-r-rather n-n-not, if you w-w-would n't m-m-mind," he murmured, with chattering teeth.

"Oh, I don't mind. It is for those who defy me to mind. But I will give her one more chance." And with another touch of the magic cane Miss Pennyback was restored to consciousness.

"Where am I?" she exclaimed in a faint tone.

"Where you ought not to be, where you have no business to be," replied Mme. Tussaud. "Now, listen to my orders. You will retire to your sleeping-apartment, lock your chamber door, and get to bed. If you stir from it until eight o'clock to-morrow morning, I will petrify you for an indefinite period of time, and then goodness knows what will

become of you, for no one but myself can bring you back to life. Possibly the authorities, discovering you in that state, will set you in a glass case and put you in the British Museum. Take your choice."

One last feeble appeal did Miss Pennyback make to Lorimer Grimweed: "Mr. Grimweed!" But seeing that the magic cane was stretched toward her, she shrieked, "I will obey—I will obey!"

"Make your obeisance, and go," said Mme. Tussaud.

Shaking like an ill-set jelly, Miss Pennyback bent low to the celebrities, and tottered from the room.

"If you will excuse me," said Lorimer Grimweed, in a cringing tone, "I will also retire. It is really time for me to get home."

"You will remain," said Mme. Tussaud. "Our business is now with you."

"Oh, but really, now," he protested, but collapsed when Henry VIII roared:

"Silence, varlet, or we will make short work of thee! Mme. la Tussaud, at your pleasure you will proceed with the indictment."

CHAPTER XXVII

SOME MATTERS OF BUSINESS

“YOUR Majesty,” said Mme. Tussaud, addressing Richard Cœur de Lion, “expressed the hope that the fair damsel who is oppressed is not our dear Mlle. Lucy. Sire, it is not that sweet child, but she suffers as deeply as if it were indeed herself who is under the oppressor’s thumb. The damsel whom we seek to release, and whose happiness we have journeyed hither to insure, is Lucy’s sister, Mlle. Lydia.”

“Ha! The fair Lydia,” said Henry VIII. “One of England’s sweetest flowers. And is it this varlet who would bar the way to her heart’s desire?”

“You shall hear, your Majesty and the royal court of England here assembled. I charge this man, Lorimer Grimweed, with using a base power he holds over the damsel’s father to force her into marriage with

him—with him whom she detests. For her love is bestowed upon a worthier gentleman, one who has provided excellent entertainment for my celebrities this day and night.”

“We have observed what passed between this pair of lovers,” said Henry VIII. “It is Harry of the Bower.”

“The same, your Majesty.”

“A proper man, and a fit mate for the fair Lydia.”

“The father of these dear girls,” said Mme. Tussaud, “has lived all his life in this pleasant retreat, which,” she added, “you may one day revisit—”

“It likes us well,” said Queen Elizabeth. “The happiness of the fair Lydia and Harry of the Bower is near to our hearts, and we should be glad to witness it.”

All the celebrities, with the exception of Richard III and the Headsman (who, being for the time inanimate, of course could n’t), rubbed their hands.

“He indeed has a great affection for Marybud Lodge, and has spent much money in beautifying it,” continued Mme. Tussaud. “It is hallowed with his tenderest memories.

His sweet daughters were born here, and it would sorely grieve them to be compelled to leave it."

"Who compels them, madame?" inquired Richard Cœur de Lion.

"This man, Lorimer Grimweed, to whom the land belongs. He boasted to me that he has old Mr. Scarlett under his thumb, and refuses to renew the lease which I have in my pocket"—she produced it—"unless our dear Lucy's sister Lydia consents to marry him."

"Nay, by St. Jude, but that shall not be," said Henry VIII, and turned to the celebrities. "What punishment shall we devise for the knave who thus conspires to destroy the happiness of England's fairest daughters?"

"Death!" they cried; and Lorimer Grimweed's knees shook, and every vestige of color left his face.

"Oh, grimes!" he gasped. "But this is awfuller than ever!"

"No, not death, your Majesties," said Mme. Tussaud, "but something perhaps even worse. Attend to me, Lorimer Grimweed.

You have witnessed the power I possess—the power which all here acknowledge.”

“We do,” said the celebrities.

“And who dare dispute the word of England’s Majesty?” said Mme. Tussaud. “Miserable man, look at the figures of my executioner and Richard III. Look well at them.”

Lorimer Grimweed gazed at the statuesque forms, and his terror became so great that he could scarcely stand.

“They will remain as you behold them,” said Mme. Tussaud, “motionless, immovable, without feeling, without power to speak, until I release them. They will remain like that, at my will and pleasure, for as long a time as I choose to keep them so. If I so decide they will remain like that forever—yes, *forever!* And as they are so shall you be unless you relinquish your pretensions to the hand of Miss Lydia, and unless you sign the new lease of Marybud Lodge. Do you consent?”

She raised her magic cane.

“No, no!” he screamed, falling on his knees. “Don’t—please don’t! Oh, spare me—spare me!”

“Do you consent?”

“ Yes—yes! Oh, grimes, oh, grimes! ”

“ You will no longer persecute Miss Lydia with your attentions? You relinquish your base design? ”

“ I do—I do! ”

“ You will sign the lease? ”

“ I will—I will! ”

“ This do you promise,” said Queen Elizabeth, in a tone of stern command, “ ‘ so grace and mercy at your most need help you! ’ ”

“ I do—I do! I ’ll do anything you want. Only put down that cane, Mme. Tussaud. There ’s no occasion for it; there is n’t, indeed! You ’ve no idea of the effect it has upon me. It gives a fellow the twitches to that extent that he feels as if he were falling to pieces! ”

“ And remember always,” said Mme. Tussaud, “ that should you break your promise, by spoken or written word, or should you give Lucy or Lydia or their papa the least annoyance, I will exercise my power over you, and there will be an end of you forever. ”

“ I will bear it in mind—I will never, never forget it. You may take my word; indeed

you may. I was never more earnest in all my life; never, never!"

Mme. Tussaud turned to her celebrities. "Have I your consent, my celebrities, to ratify this agreement?"

"You have," they replied.

"Then we will have the lease signed at once, and some of you shall witness it. Harry Bower, do you know where Mr. Scarlett sleeps?"

"Yes, madame."

"Go and awake him if he be asleep, and ask him to have the kindness to step here for a few minutes. We will not detain him long."

Mr. Scarlett was only half asleep, and his brain was teeming with extraordinary fancies, when Harry entered his bedroom; and greatly astonished was he at the message. Hastily scrambling into his clothes, he accompanied the young man in a confused state of mind to the drawing-room.

"It is n't all a dream, is it Harry?" he asked, before they reached the room.

"No, sir," replied Harry; "it is a very happy reality."

"And my dear Lydia and you are to be married?"

"I hope so, sir."

"I hope so, too; for she would be happy with no one but you, Harry. You shall have the nicest wedding! But the way it has been brought about, the way I have been made to see my error—so strange, so singular, so beautiful! Ah, Harry, it is never too late to learn."

"Mr. Scarlett," said Mme. Tussaud, when he and Harry appeared, "I regret that you should have been disturbed, but no doubt you will be pleased when you learn why we require your presence. I am happy to inform you that Mr. Lorimer Grimweed has withdrawn his suit for your daughter Lydia's hand." She paused and looked at Lorimer Grimweed for confirmation of her statement.

"Yes, I withdraw, I withdraw," said the trembling man.

"In favor of Harry Bower," continued Mme. Tussaud, "to whom Lydia has given her heart." Again she looked at Lorimer Grimweed.

"Of course, of course," he stammered. "In favor of Harry Bower."

"You will be pleased also to learn that Mr. Grimweed has agreed to sign the new lease

which he brought with him to-day. I think I may say that, under the circumstances,"—she fixed her eyes upon Lorimer Grimweed and repeated,—“under the circumstances, he is anxious to retain you as his tenant. That is so, is it not, Mr. Grimweed?”

“Most anxious—*most* anxious.”

“You have found Mr. Scarlett a good tenant, I hope, Mr. Grimweed?”

“Certainly, most certainly. No landlord could desire a better one.”

“Pays his rent regularly, I trust?”

“Regular as clockwork. Never behind.”

“The lease, I see, is for seven years, renewable at your option, Mr. Scarlett, at the end of that term for another seven, and after that for another seven. But I should like to ask you one question. In such a delightful locality as this, property would naturally increase in value. Has Marybud Lodge increased in value?”

“I think it has,” said Mr. Scarlett.

“Then there should be an increase in rent.”

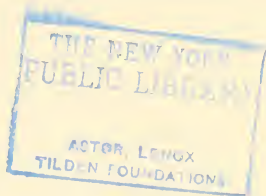
“I am willing to pay it.”

“Say an increase of fifty pounds a year.”

“Willingly, willingly,” said Mr. Scarlett.



The celebrities witnessing Grimweed's signature

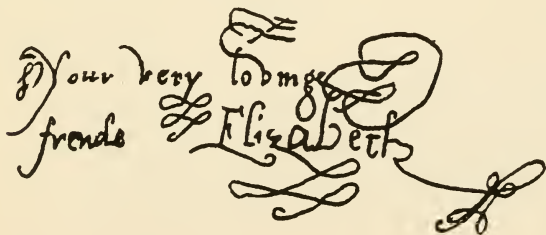


"You see, Mr. Grimweed," said Mme. Tus-saud, "that Mr. Scarlett is desirous to deal fairly by you. Harry Bower, bring pen and ink. Alter the figures, Mr. Grimweed, and put another fifty pounds a year into your pocket."

"Doth the varlet deserve it, Mme. la Tus-saud?" said Henry VIII.

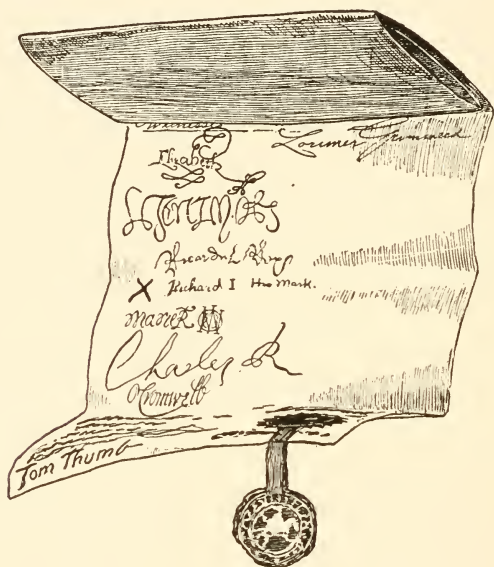
"In man's dealing with man, your Majesty," she replied, "justice should be the principal aim. Mr. Grimweed will perhaps learn the lesson that honesty is the best policy. In human life, justice, mercy, and kindness are three of its brightest jewels. Have you made the alteration, Mr. Grimweed? Yes, I see you have. Now please sign. This is your hand and deed? Good. Will your Majesty be kind enough to witness the signature?"

She handed the pen to Queen Elizabeth, who wrote her name thus:



"Now your signature, Henry," said Mme. Tussaud, passing the pen to Henry VIII.

After these signatures came those of Richard Cœur de Lion, Mary Queen of Scots, Charles II, Oliver Cromwell, and, last of all,



The Lease

Tom Thumb, who had to be lifted up to the table to write his name.

"Genuine autographs," said Mme. Tussaud, handing the precious lease to Mr. Scar-

lett, "for which collectors would give untold gold. Take great care of it, Mr. Scarlett, for it is a unique document." She accompanied him to the door, after he had bowed to the celebrities and had received a gracious acknowledgment from them. "Do you know whom you have to thank for this, Mr. Scarlett?"

"You, madame," he answered.

"No," she said. "It is your dear, brave little Lucy you have to thank for it. Good night, Lucy's papa. Sleep well."

Then she went back to her celebrities, and touched Richard III and the Headsman with her magic cane. To Lorimer Grimweed's alarm, they instantly came to life. He held up his hands to ward them off.

"They will not harm you, Mr. Grimweed," said Mme. Tussaud. "You may now retire. But you will not leave the house. You will remain within these walls until daylight, when you will be free to depart."

Half an hour afterward Mme. Tussaud stood in Lydia's bedroom. On this night the sisters slept together. The celebrities were

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assembled in the grounds, close to the back entrance of the Lodge, and Harry Bower was with them. They were about to leave the fortress, with victory inscribed upon their banner.

Lucy and Lydia were in dreamland.

Mme. Tussaud, gazing pensively upon the sisters, thought she had never seen a sweeter picture. Lucy's arm was round Lydia's neck, and one little hand was on the counterpane. Peace and joy were typified in the sleeping forms. Their soft breathing was like a zephyr's flowing kiss, and there was perfect happiness on their faces.

"Good night, darling Lucy," murmured Mme. Tussaud; "good night, dear Lydia. You remind me of my Princes in the Tower, but a vastly happier fate awaits you. Good night, good night. Joy be with you!"

CHAPTER XXVIII

FAREWELL TO MARYBUD LODGE

WHEN she rejoined her celebrities in the grounds Mme. Tussaud made them a little speech, in which she cordially thanked them for their assistance.

“We have accomplished the task we set out to perform,” she said, “and have made our dear Lucy happy, and through her—never forget that, Harry Bower—you and your pretty Lydia. Love her and cherish her, and you will have a full measure of the best that life can give. Love is the most precious gift that Heaven has bestowed upon mankind. Yes, my celebrities, the curtain is falling upon our comedy. Meanness is defeated, love is triumphant. You have behaved admirably, all of you—especially you, Tom Thumb, and you, Queen Elizabeth, and you, Henry VIII—but I will not make invidious comparisons. You all have done well. I promised

you entertainment, Henry. Have I kept my word?"

"By my troth!" he answered, "'t is nigh upon four hundred years since we spent so happy a day."

"We return now to our beloved show," continued Mme. Tussaud, "where we will stand, as we have stood for many generations in the past, and will for many generations in the future, for the instruction and entertainment of old and young. And if perchance this adventure of ours comes to their knowledge—though of course that is almost too much to hope for—but if it should, our visitors will gaze upon us with renewed interest, and old people who visited us when they were young will come again to renew the joys of those early days. Harry Bower will accompany us on our homeward journey, and I beg of you to be very, very careful, and very, very obedient. This is not the last of our adventures. I promise you many happy days in the future, when I trust Richard III will endeavor to be more agreeable than he has been to-day."

"It hath been a merry day, Tom of the

Thumb," said Queen Elizabeth, looking down kindly upon her Lilliputian cavalier.

"A bully day, Queen E," Tom replied. "Even in my free and enlightened country we could hardly get up such a good picnic as this."

"And see, Tom, the moon!" said Elizabeth.

The floating clouds revealed its radiance, and the garden of Marybud Lodge was flooded with fairy light. With a languishing glance at the queen, the little man said:

" 'Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear, that tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops—' "

" 'O, swear not by the moon, th' inconstant moon,' " Elizabeth murmured coyly.

There was a look of sadness on their faces as Harry Bower unlocked the gate leading to the old stables in which stood the van and horses which had conveyed them to Marybud Lodge, and were now to convey them back to Marylebone Road.

Queen Elizabeth paused before she passed out, and, with a wave of her royal hand to her companions, said:

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“ ‘Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air: ’ ”

“ No, no, your Majesty,” interposed Mme. Tussaud, “ not quite that.”

“ I am speaking the words of our sweet Will,” said Queen Elizabeth, “ and there is some application in them to our state.

‘ Are melted into air, into thin air :
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp’d towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on ; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.’ ”

CHAPTER XXIX

BACK TO THEIR PLACES

BY the same arts which she had employed at the commencement of the adventure Mme. Tussaud brought it to a successful termination. The return, it is true, was more difficult than the setting out had been, for the exhibition was jealously guarded. Additional night-watchmen had been put on, and, late as it was, there were still a few persons outside, gazing at the walls, with a vague notion that something like the wonders related in the story of Aladdin might take place before their eyes. But the tack and cleverness of the mistress of the show were equal to the occasion. She glided about like a spirit. Every human being in the vicinity of the exhibition was transfixed by a touch of her magic cane. Those who occupied the places of the missing celebrities were carried out swiftly and dexterously by Loushkin, Oliver

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Cromwell, and Harry Bower, and the celebrities themselves stepped into their old positions and were there transfixed. Some of them were inclined to argue the matter, but their mistress succeeded in convincing them that it would be much the best for them to yield gracefully. When this was done, Mme. Tussaud went back to the street and set all the human beings in motion again. It was as simple as a-b-c. The horses in the post-office van trotted off, with the driver on the box; the revived persons walked on as though nothing had occurred; and everything was as it had been twenty-four hours before. Then Mme. Tussaud wished Harry Bower good night, bidding him be sure to give her fond love to Lucy and Lydia; next she set her firemen and night-watchmen going again, and finally she stepped into her old place, at the head of Mme. Sainte Amaranthe.

You may be sure she first took great pains to put her magic cane where no one but herself could find it; and she was quite right to be so careful, for if it happened to fall into other hands there is no telling what might occur.



“Those who occupied the places of the missing celebrities were carried out swiftly
and dexterously by Loushkin, Oliver Cromwell, and Harry Bower”



As for what the public journals said on the following day, the consultations held, the investigations and speculations of the learned doctors, the scientific theories started, the letters written to the newspapers by the most eminent men in the kingdom, the fresh wave of excitement that paralyzed business, the second visits of the Lord Mayor and the sheriffs and aldermen in their state robes and carriages, and of the Prince and Princess of Wales and the whole of the royal family, including their Most Gracious Majesties the King and Queen, the frantic rush of the fashionable classes and of every member of society to get into the exhibition—if you should succeed in obtaining a copy of the book of which mention is made in a previous chapter, you will find the whole of these particulars recorded therein.

CHAPTER XXX

ORANGE-BLOSSOMS AND WEDDING-CAKE

WHEN the lavender-fields were sending forth their delicious perfume—every one knows what time of the year that is by the cry, “A penny a bunch, sweet lavender!” in all the streets—there was a wedding. Nothing very wonderful in that, you say. No; but this was a very special wedding, and if you are clever (which of course you are, or you would not be reading this comedy) you may be able to guess the names of the bride and bridegroom. All you have to do is to take the initials L. S. and H. B., and entwine them in a true lover’s knot. Perhaps that will assist you.

To describe the happiness of this young couple is simply an impossibility. Any attempt of ours to depict it would be nothing less than a downright failure, so let us be

content with saying that they were very, very, very happy.

Will you be surprised to hear that there was some one happier even than the bride and bridegroom? A little girl—Lucy.

Yes; though her white kid gloves *did* burst when she was putting them on, and she had n't another pair, there was not in all his Majesty's dominions (Edward VII's, not Henry VIII's) a happier human being than Lucy on this glorious wedding-day—nor a prettier.

Fresh from his ocean bath rose the sun at the earliest possible moment in the morning, and continued to shine until quite late; which perhaps was the reason why Lucy's and Lydia's eyes were so luminous. All the birds in Marybud were awake long before their regular time, and the moment the sky began to blush (it was a blushing day, you know) they began to sing, and did not leave off singing for hours and hours.

At four o'clock in the afternoon a smart open carriage stopped at the gates of a certain exhibition in Marylebone Road. The horses had wedding rosettes at their ears,

there was a wedding favor on the whip, and the coachman wore a huge bouquet. And out of the carriage who should step but Lucy and Lydia and Harry Bower and old Mr. Scarlett! Lucy had a little parcel in her hand, neatly tied up with white ribbon, of which she was taking the greatest care. Lydia and Harry and Mr. Scarlett had a number of smaller parcels in their pockets.

They had been several times to the exhibition lately, as had all the other persons who lived in Marybud Lodge, and Lorimer Grimweed as well, and more than once Mr. Scarlett had said:

“I suppose it *did* all happen, Lucy?”

“Oh, papa!” answered Lucy. “Such a question!”

But the same thought had occurred to others—to Miss Pennyback, for instance, and the Marchioness of Barnet, and Sir Rowley, and Flip of the Odd. Not to Belinda. *She* never had a doubt on the subject. Indeed, when she visited the exhibition with the order which Mme. Tussaud had given her, she astonished persons standing near her by saying in quite a loud voice:

“ Oh, yes, I dessay! You may make believe to be wax, but Belinda knows. Oh, you ’Enery the Heighth—you *are* a funny one!”

And she caused further astonishment, when she stood before Loushkin the Russian giant, by looking up at him and informing him that it was her day out next Monday.

Miss Pennyback, on her visit, would have liked to box Mme. Tussaud’s ears, but fear of consequences restrained her. “ Where is that mysterious cane?” she thought. She peered in every direction, without catching sight of it.

As for Lorimer Grimweed, he hardly knew what to think. He had read in the newspapers the astonishing accounts of the human beings who had been transfixed in Mme. Tussaud’s exhibition, and of their wonderful coming to life again, and although when he thought of the last day and night he had spent in Marybud Lodge he sometimes shook his head, he had too wholesome a fear of the power of the magic cane ever to dispute the lease, or ever to trouble the Scarlett family more.

And now here were Lucy and her papa,

and the bride and bridegroom, walking through the exhibition, while the carriage waited for them at the gates. They stopped at every one of their old friends, and to her special favorites Lucy said softly:

"How do you do? This is dear Lydia's wedding-day, and she could n't go honeymooning without coming to tell you."

The figures stared straight before them and said nothing.

"Of course you must n't move or speak," whispered Lucy, confidentially, "because people are about. We quite understand that, so please don't disturb yourselves. But we know you wish her joy. Don't you think she is a beautiful bride? Every one in the church said she was the most lovely bride that ever was seen. And she is."

The small parcels with which the pockets of the bridal party were filled contained chocolate creams, and wherever they moved they looked for places in which to secrete them, where the visitors would not be likely to see them. It was more difficult to get rid of the larger parcel which Lucy carried, but presently, when they were close to Shakspeare's platform, Lydia said:

“Now, Lucy, quick! No one’s looking.”
Like lightning Lucy glided behind the platform and dropped her parcel there. No



“‘We all are so happy’”

one except themselves saw her do it, or knew she had done anything at all.

They remained a long time by Mme. Tussaud’s side.

“Dear, dear Mme. Tussaud!” whispered Lucy. “We could n’t let the day pass with-

out coming to see you. We all are so happy—oh, so happy! Lydia is Mrs. Harry Bower now. Does n't it sound grand? Mrs.—Harry—Bower! And all through you! Oh, how grateful we are to you! We have put posies of Marybud flowers under the seats, and some orange-blossoms, too, and bags of chocolate creams everywhere. And listen, please. I have just dropped behind Shakspeare's platform a paper parcel with—what do you think in it? Fourteen—pieces—of—wedding—cake—tied—up—with—white—ribbon. With our love—with our dear love. The large piece is for you, the others for the celebrities. Give them all our love, please. Good-by. We shall come again—often. Good-by—good-by. We can't stop any longer now, for fear Lydia and Harry should miss the train. They are going to Honeymoon Land."

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